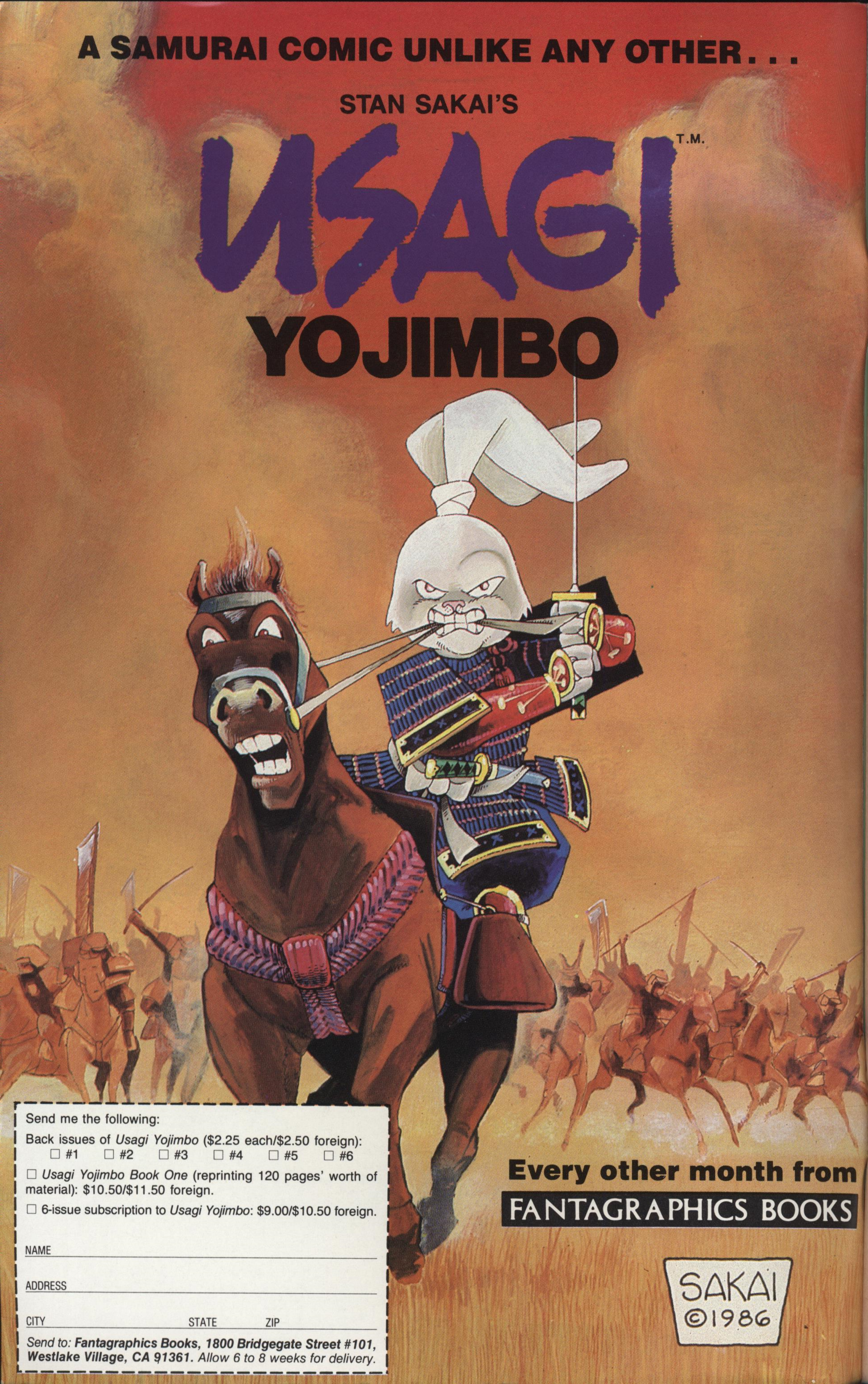
• No. 129 • Nov. 15 • $2.95 ($4.40 in Canada)

AMAZING HEROES

SPECIAL
FUNNY-
ANIMAL
ISSUE!

In This Issue: **STEVEN A. GALLACCI and FREDDY MILTON speak!** *Behind the new* ***MIGHTY MOUSE*** *cartoon series! And much more!*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Our Cover: Steven A. Gallacci offers up three of his most famous characters. Colored by Doug Erb and Steven A. Gallacci; separations by Coco Shinomiya. All characters pictured are © Steven A. Gallacci and don't you forget it!

Editorial

A short time before passing *Amazing Heroes* into the capable and loving hands of Kevin Dooley, I had come up with the idea of an all-funny-animal issue. In fact, I'd more or less planned out the whole issue, and had contacted several cartoonists and writers on the subject. But because "theme" issues are difficult to do (I still remember sweating over the all-Japanese issue), I postponed the notion until I no longer had a magazine to put it in. Since Kevin doesn't particularly share my unholy love for critters and anthropomorphics of every stripe, I figured that was that.

But, like a giant cockroach, the idea refused to die. A number of funny-animal cartoonists kept asking me what happened to the project, and I kept coming up with neat ideas for the issue. . .so eventually I asked Kevin if he'd mind my "guest-editing" an issue to get it out of my system. I was sneaky about it: I waited until *Amazing Heroes*' schedule hit a nasty snarl, and then told Kevin I'd "help him out" by doing an issue while he caught his breath. (I've found it always helps to look magnanimous when you're pursuing your own selfish goals.) He fell for it. . .or, on second thought, maybe he was just being polite.

If this issue turned out to be a breeze for Kevin, not so for our poor art director, Doug Erb, who suddenly found himself waist deep in drawings of ducks, mice, 'possums, and dragons, as well as too-long articles with incredibly elaborate art instructions typed out by an editor who didn't know when to stop. After the dust had settled, we found ourselves with an issue about 32 pages longer than it was supposed to be. (Thank God the ever-confused Apple Comics failed to deliver their promised *Space Ark* FirstLook, or the issue might have had to go squarebound.) At any rate, Doug and his squadron of helpers have done their usual great job, and within the established deadline, too. Thanks, guys!

I don't normally go out of my way to plug the things we're covering in our articles, but I think you should check out the new *Mighty Mouse* show. If you can't get your ass out of bed by 9:30, set your VCR, for God's sake! It's worth the effort; trust me.

Finally, apologies to the amazing Sidney Mellon, whose name was misspelled in his opening column last issue (in the headline, no less). I've enjoyed Sidney's work for what seems like weeks, maybe even months, and I'm sorry to introduce him to our readers this way. At least I was able to hustle him into "my" issue, where he provides a much-needed counterpoint to the rest of the proceedings. I eagerly look forward to seeing "Amazing Readers" fill up with Sidney correspondents. Don't disappoint me, now! —KIM THOMPSON

Next issue: A look at the new Epic explosion, including the Shadow Line series, plus an interview with J. M. DeMatteis and a special Blood cover by Kent Williams! All this and more, as Kevin Dooley returns and says "what the hell *did you do with my magazine while my back was turned, you maniac?!"* ●

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Amazing Heroes #131 (ships late November)......**October 30**
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NEWSLINE

DC BONUS BOOKS; *'MAZING MAN* SPECIAL; LEGION's 30th

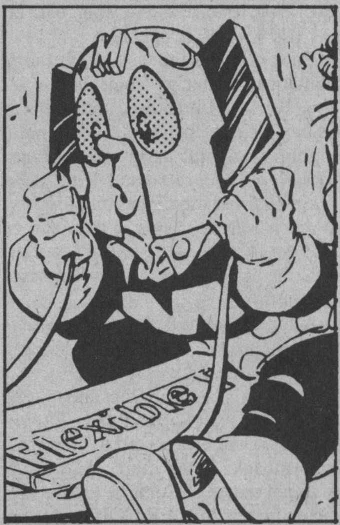
Beginning in January, DC will present a free 16-page insert in a different comic each month. Each Bonus Book will have its own "cover," 14 pages of story, and one page of text.

This is a continuation of DC's search for new, imaginative talent: new writers, new artists, new inkers, etc. ***Action Comics* #599** will contain the first "Bonus Book Section"—a Superman/Jimmy Olsen story by writer JOE CALCHI, penciller BRITT WISENBAKER, and inker JIM SCOTT.

Also in ***Action Comics* #599** will be a story in which the **Metal Men** will attempt to rebuild **Tin**, destroyed in ***Action Comics* #590**; the pencilling for this issue will be by Ross Andru, who drew many of the original ***Metal Men*** comics.

What could be a better Xmas present that ***'Mazing Man Special* #2**? Brought to you by writer BOB ROZAKIS and artist STEPHEN DeSTEFANO and a quartet of inkers (LEIALOHA, KESEL, ROBBINS, and BOLDMAN) it will sell for $2.00.

There will be a ***Suicide Squad/ Doom Patrol*** Special in December. Illustrated by ERIK LARSEN, who does a wraparound cover, the storyline, co-written by JOHN OSTRANDER and PAUL KUPPERBERG, will center around the two team's attempt to rescue **Hawk** from the **Rocket Reds** in Latin America.



'Mazing Man Special by Rozakis & DeStefano

Vigilante is dead, long live. . .you know. It seems after **Vig** kicks off in issue **#50** (that being the last issue of his regular title), he will not go into limbo forever (what character does?), but will reappear in a mini-series written by one of his creators: MARV WOLFMAN. The *new* **Vig** will supposedly be "grimmer, more action-oriented." The series itself will focus *less* on the protagonist's motivations.

They don't look a day over 29, but it seems (after the origin of **Quislet** in issue **#44**), a 30th anniversary celebration is in order for the ***Legion of Super-Heroes***. The **Legion** first appeared in ***Adventure Comics* #247** and (along with the redone version of that story, as reported last issue, which will appear in ***Secret Origins* #25** by PAUL LEVITZ and RICK STASI) ***LSH* #45** will commemorate the event by being a 64-page Special. Selling for $2.95 this issue will have a cover painting by KEN STEACY. The story "Unlucky Streak" will be written by PAUL LEVITZ, and feature art by DAVE COCKRUM, MIKE GRELL, KEITH GIFFEN, KURT SCHAFFENBERGER, CURT SWAN, GREG LAROCQUE, with inks by DAN DeCARLO and DICK GIORDANO. ●

MARVEL UNIVERSE WEEKLY COMIC! NEW X-MEN TEAM!

In Spring of 1988, every week Marvel fans (and anybody else, too) will be able to go to the store and pick up ***Marvel Universe***. No, not the entire universe itself, but a 32-page, $1.50 comic containing stories about many of Marvel's popular characters, as well as some *new* heroes, heroines, etc. Mind you, most of these plans are tentative at present and more information will be released as things are finalized.

The stories themselves will all be eight pages long (allowing for four per issue for you non-Math majors). Some will be continuing tales and others will be self-contained. For instance, in issue **#1** CHRIS CLAREMONT writes, JOHN BUSCEMA draws, and KLAUS JANSON inks the first part of a **Wolverine** serial.

DOUG MOENCH will be doing a **Shang-Chi, Master of Kung-Fu** serial, possibly with PAUL GULACY, although it's not definite. Other possibilities are STEVE GERBER doing a **Man-Thing** serial.

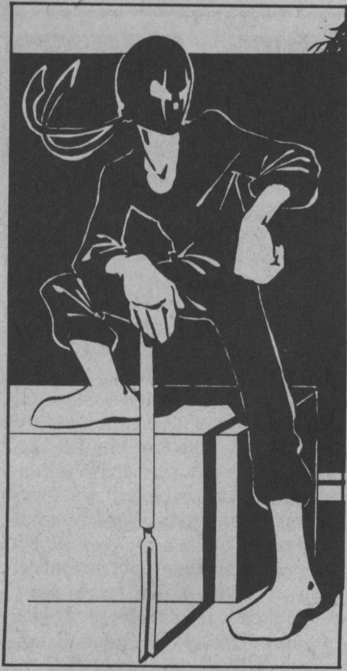
Shang-Chi part of Marvel's weekly roster?

A new X-Men team!? As a matter of fact, in issue **#228** of those uncanny mutants that have given rise to so many spin-offs, there will be not only a new team, a new direction, and according to their press release, "a new concept."

In other mutant news, in the back-up for ***Classic X-Men* #20** (reprinting ***X-Men* #114**) in an adventure set in the Savage Land, **Colossus** loses something we all only lose once, thanks to two savage women. The story is by regulars CHRIS CLAREMONT and JOHN BOLTON. Cover is by ART ADAMS. *(Two?)*

"Crash"—the **Iron Man Graphic Novel** will be 72 pages of artwork done completely by computer, including coloring via a machine-generated airbrush effect. MIKE SAENZ, who did First's ***Shatter*** when it began, will be handling the pencil. . .ink. . .I mean keyboard chores. **Nick Fury** guest stars in a story that contains, according to the press release, "much violence, with hints of sex, though no frontal nudity is depicted." (Darn.) The whole thing will sell for $12.95. *(Two!?)*

Further news: ***Pinocchio and the Emperor of the Night*** is the title of Marvel's adaptation (by the team of JACOBSON, BROWN, and ROETTCHER) of the soon to be released animated feature from Filmation (*TWO!?!*) ●



Wagner draws Grendel & Mage for four issues.

BLACKTHORNE ROSES

Coming 3-D: December will ship *four* titles for blue/magenta glasses fans: ***BraveStarr® in 3-D #2*** written by JOHN STEPHENSON and drawn by ADRIAN MORO and ***Gumby in 3-D #6***, and two new titles ***Richie Rich and Casper in 3-D #1***, which will pit the poor little rich boy and the friendly ghost against Dr. Frankenspook's "Switcheroo Ray," and ***The California Raisins in 3-D #1*** (possibly the hit of the season, considering all the play the commercials have been getting), which will be done by DAVID CODY WEISS, who also does ***Gumby in 3-D.***

CHESTER GOULD fans celebrate: ***Dick Tracy Monthly*** will be going weekly in January. Have no fear, the ***Early Years, Unprinted*** and ***Reuben*** paperback series do continue.

Shipping in the first month of the new year will be ***Flintstones #4, Star Wars #2,*** and ***Transformers #3.***

Following in the traced footsteps of ***The Official How To Draw Robotech*** and ***TOHTD Transformers*** is ***The Official How to Draw G.I. Joe #1*** in December, done by DENNIS MILLER, who does all the ***TOHTD***s.

Printing of the Timeline Color comics series in graphic novel format begins in January with ***Operative: Scorpio*** by JACK HERMAN, art by DAN TOLENTINO and DANIE TAER, and ***XL,*** written by CLIFF MacGILLIVRAY, pencilled by DENNIS FRANCIS and inked by BOB VERSANDI. ●

MATT WAGNER BACK FOR 4 *GRENDELS* WITH *MAGE* BRIDGE

MATT WAGNER will be doing the writing, pencilling and inking on four upcoming issues of his creation ***Grendel*** beginning in the January 1988 shipped books. They will contain two 2-part stories. Coloring will be by TOM VINCENT.

Each of these four issues will also contain a chapter of "Interlude" starring **Kevin Matchstick** and will act as the "bridge" between the Wagner's highly successful maxi-series ***Mage: The Hero Discovered*** and ***Mage: The Hero Defined*** the sequel maxi-series, which is slated to begin in the summer of 1989. The back-up will be written and hand painted by, of course, Wagner.

After these four issues, ***Grendel*** will have a new art team, undecided at press time.

HARLAN ELLISON and KEN STEACY's ***Night and the Enemy*** graphic novel is expected to come out in hardback . . .and more. According to a spokesman at Comico, Ellison has been hired by ROGER CORMAN and NBC to do it as a tele-play. Called "Cutter's World," the 2-hour pilot is not yet committed for production, but boasts the personal involvement of BRANDON TARTIKOFF, president of NBC. A spin-off of the pilot could work as a mid-season replacement or in the fall line-up. ●

ECLIPSE'S COMING MANGA SERIES

MASAOMI KANZAKI's ***Xenon*** is another bi-weekly reprint series. The title character is a powerful cyborg and a high school senior, who does not remember he was created by criminals or anything about his past. ***Xenon*** is a $1.50 B&W on sale late December.

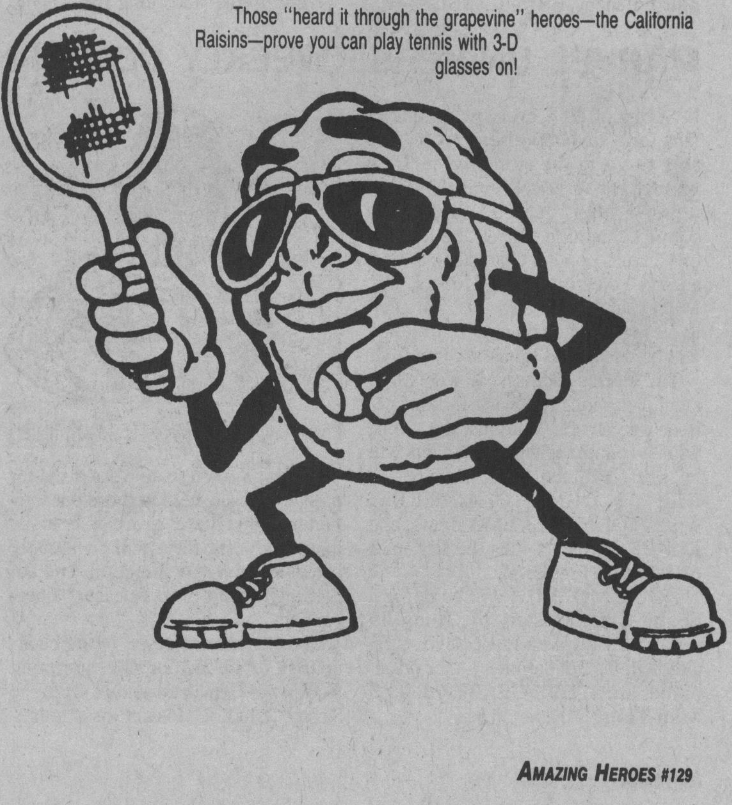
Speaking of manga, "The Sword Wind," the second book in the adventures of Kamui, young ninja, begins in issue **#14** of his title.

"The Trial" convenes in the conclusion of LELA DOWLING's "Alice in Wonderland" in ***The Dreamery #7.***

The ***Valkyrie!*** mini-series by CHUCK DIXON, PAUL GULACY and WILLIE BLYBERG will be compiled in the ***Valkyrie! Collection*** for $6.95. A new painted cover by GULACY will adorn the 72-page, squarebound volume.

Walt Kelly's Christmas Classics #1 will have two 1940 stories by the man famous for the ***Pogo*** comic strip. Both will star Santa Claus. There is a prose feature by MAGGIE THOMPSON and STEVE LEIALOHA did the cover. It will be full-color $1.75 deluxe format.

Also in deluxe format (but selling for $2.00) will be ***Directory of a Nonexistent Universe #1***—a parody of the many hero "Who's Who"s—art and words by KARRY CALLEN, known for silly covers. An 8-page back-up features some of the characters in a story called "Super Time." ●

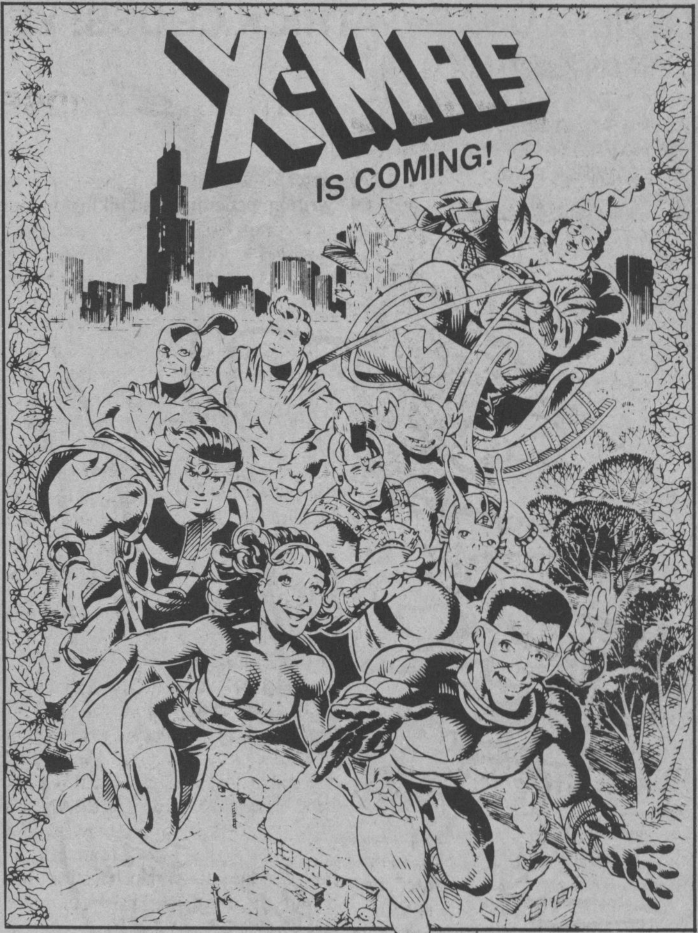


Those "heard it through the grapevine" heroes—the California Raisins—prove you can play tennis with 3-D glasses on!

A MEGATON XMAS

Just in time for Xmas is *X-Mas*—a one-shot special. It is not a parody (though the logo is), but a sampler/anthology of Megaton talents and characters in seasonsal stories. Publisher GARY CARLSON described it as being "the ideal introduction to our titles."

Among the entries are a **Megaton/Ultragirl** story co-written by GARY CARLSON and RON FORTIER, with art by GARY THOMAS WASHINGTON of *Speed Racer* fame; after 15 years **Dr. Weird**, from the fanzine *Star-Studded*, returns in a Christmas horror tale by ED DeGEORGE and ANGEL MEDINA, and inked by Doc's creator HOWARD KELTNER. Other characters who will appear are **Vanguard** will appear, drawn by STEVE ADAMS, who was one of the Marvel Try-Out runner-ups, GRASS GREEN's **Wildman & Rubberboy**, **Feral** by KEN MEYER, Jr., and a **Ramm** text tale. There is a wraparound cover by JOHN THOMPSON, who contributes an **Ultragirl** solo story. The black and white 64-pager will sell for $2.00. ●



Not a parody, but a sampler anthology of Megaton titles and talent, such as Megaton, Wildman & Rubberboy, Ramm, by Gary Washington, Gary Carlson, Ron Fortier, Grass Green and others.

MUNDEN ANNUAL

Raise your glasses in a resounding "Huzzah!" for Munden's Bar, longtime back-up in First's *Grimjack*, about a saloon located in the very heart of Cynosure, the pandimensional city, will have its own 48-page, full color special.

Munden's Bar Annual #1 will feature three new concoctions. No, it's not the effects of the Fusion Fizzle™, for the first time **Antisocialman** will be in full color! The story, of course by creator MATT FEAZELL, is, according to the press release, a special 23-page graphic novel. . .in 8 pages. STEVE MONCUSE's **Fish Police** will be tipping a few; and a group TOAST by JOHN OSTRANDER, DEL CLOSE, and JOE STATON.

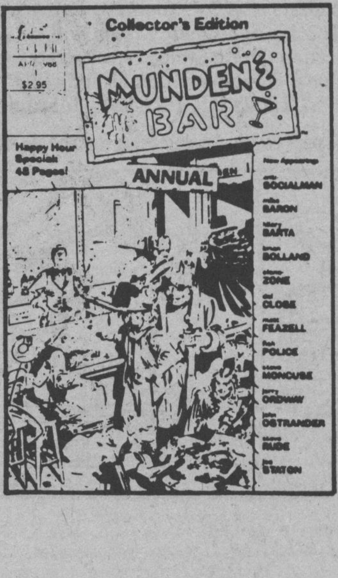
Sauntering up for a second round will be reprints of "Mother's Calling" by BRIAN BOLLAND, "Doppelganger" by JERRY ORDWAY, who does the cover, and a classic Munden's tale by MIKE BARON and STEVE RUDE.

Munden's Bar Annual #1 will be perfect bound and sell for $2.95.

Other First news: in ***Whisper #12*** original artist RICH LARSON returns to team up with creator/writer STEVEN GRANT for a unique night before Xmas tale called "Christmas Stalking." Cover will be by BILL SIENKIEWICZ.

Issues ***#34*** and **35** of ***Badger*** is a two-part story about biker demons from. . .you guessed it. . .hell. Story by MIKE BARON, art by RON LIM and JAY GELDHOF. The cover to ***#34*** is by MIKE ZECK and JOHN BEATTY. ●

New stories and old in *Munden's Bar Annual* #1.



MORE ON HARRIER

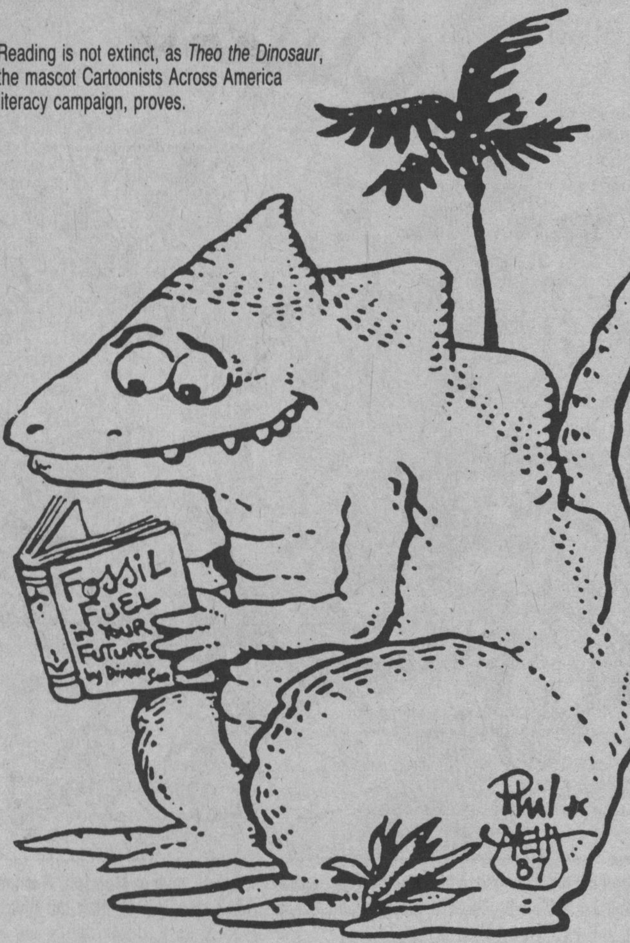
In addition to all the news we had in the interview with Harrier publisher Martin Lock last issue: there are some more recent developments.

Due out in January of next year is the ***Harrier Preview***, a 75 cent book will introduce two different titles that may be published latter on in the year. The first issue will feature the characters in the new book ***Cuirass***, about a young girl with magical armor in a barbaric world. This tale was written by ALAN COWSILL and illustrated by JOHN H. MARSCHALL. The back-up feature will be a preview of ***Nightbird***, a four-issue limited series dealing with the all-female crew of the starship Nightbird, as written by MARTIN LOCK and illustrated by CAM SMITH. The book will also include additional preview material for other Harrier books.

Avalon's regular features will be suspended for the 13th issue as **Deathwatch**, as seen in his own one-shot, and **Overman**, from ***Grun***, meet in a special, supernatural tale. ●

OTHER: USAGI/PATRICK CROSS; YEAR OF DINOSAUR

Reading is not extinct, as *Theo the Dinosaur*, the mascot Cartoonists Across America literacy campaign, proves.


FOSSIL FUEL in YOUR FUTURE by Dinosaur
Phil ★ YEH 87

ADVENTURE: the first three issues of ***Star Rangers*** will be a three-part story set on the vice-rampant world of Amicus, story by MARK ELLIS, art by JIM MOONEY, and will have 6-page back-ups of **Death Hawk**—a mercenary of tomorrow—by PETER HSU.

AMERICOMICS: ***The Armageddon Factor*** 3-ish mini-series stars **Captain Paragon, Scarlet Scorpion,** most of **Femforce**, and others. With script and art by RIK LEVINS, a skeleton tells about Earth's annihilation. The book-length story "The High and the Mighty" appears in ***Fantasy Features #3*** and will be all full page one-panel illustrations pencilled and inked by DELL BARRAS.

CHROME TIGER: First title ***Menagerie***, a monthly anthology. In **#1** "Scarycat and Mousekanaut" (animal mercenaries) by PAULA SHOUDY and MIKE RAABE, "Iron Crosses" (s-f) by CLIFTON JACKSON, CHRIS JOHNSON, and MIKE RAABE; in **#2** "Reflections" (horror) by LANA K. APRILL and CHRISTOPHER RUSH; JACKSON again, on "Tails of the Red Legion" (barbarían prarie dog) with CINDY MURATA; DONNA BARR gives us "Hader and the Colonel" (rabbit wants to be human), more. ***Menagerie*** is B&W, 32-pages, no ads, for $1.95.

COMICS INTERVIEW: Every main character since the first issue appears in **#25** of ***Southern Knights***. The ***Micra Graphic Album*** will collecting the first three issues in addition to some new material, for $4.95.

ECLECTIC PRESS: Johnny Gambit, once from Hot Comics, returns in ***Gambit & Associates. #1*** reprints the first chapter with new art by ALAN D. OLDHAM. Includes introduction by MIKE BARON.

ENTERTAINMENT: ***Delta Tenn*** battles "the Vanna White of 1997." in **#4**. They have words. THRUSH tries to kill Waverly in U.N.C.L.E.'s H.Q. in issue **5** of ***The Man from****. . . .*

FRAGMENTS WEST: December will see ***Theo the Dinosaur,*** the first color comic from PHIL YEH. The cover reproduces Yeh's painting which will be a poster for a literacy campaign, as Cartoonists Across America has declared 1988 as *The Year of the Dinosaur.* ***Theo*** will sell for $2.50. ***Penguin & Pencilguin #4*** has a guest feature "Don Guinote de la Moche" by ALFREDO ALCALA. **Patrick Rabbit** meets **Usagi Yojimbo** in ***Frank the Unicorn #6***. In turn the origin of **Patrick** appears in Fantagraphics Books' ***Usagi Yojimbo #7***.

RIP OFF PRESS: "Adventures Under Arrest" is the subject of ***Rip Off Comic #17*** highlighting stories by DAN O'NEILL, DORI SEDA, DON SIMPSON, JOSHUA QUAGMIRE, LARRY WELZ, LARRY MARDER, and others telling about their run-ins with da law. ●

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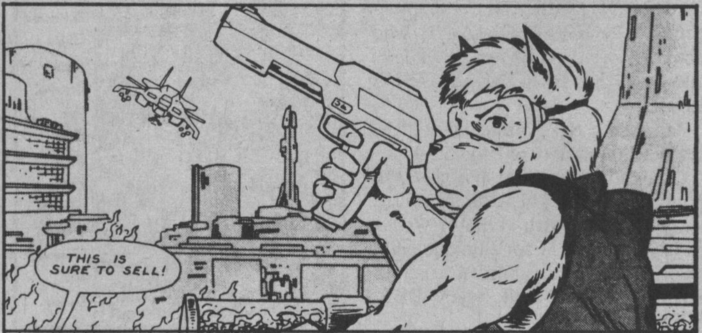
Science fiction animals in "Scarycat and Mousekanaut" one of the many genres in *Menagerie*.


THIS IS SURE TO SELL!

ECLIPSE COMICS™

PAGE 9

contents © 1987 Eclipse.

RETAILER PUSH BRINGS FANS TO *CAL GIRLS*

Female Customers Take Extra Care, Says Trina

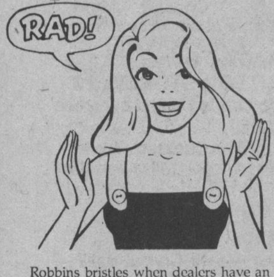
"Yes, you *can* sell a black and white book with no superheroes in it!" proclaims *California Girls* writer/artist/creator Trina Robbins in a recent open letter to comics retailers. "*California Girls* isn't just any black and white comic (it isn't even all black and white!). It's aimed for a specific market, but that market won't be able to find it unless you help."

Robbins wrote the letter to retailers after her advice to Marc Davis, manager of Comic and Card Castle in San Jose, CA, worked wonders on his store's sales of *California Girls*. "He came up to me at the San Diego Con to tell me that my advice worked, and that the book not only sold out, but the readers were returning for the next issue," says Robbins.

"I told Marc that young girls will come into your store, often unwillingly, dragged there by their father, brother, or boyfriend. You can tell by looking at them that they're bored," Robbins says. "They'll fidget, and ask if the male who brought them there is finished yet—can they go soon?

"The superhero comics bore them—they don't relate to them. These girls are your targets. Show them a copy of *California Girls* and tell them that this is one book you know they'll like. That's all there is to it! Once the audience knows about *California Girls*, the book will sell itself, and they'll be back for more."

Robbins says that one dealer reported at the San Diego Con that she was actually making a money-back guarantee on *California Girls*. "She's telling her customers that if they buy the book and don't like it, she'll refund their money—something she's never done before—and nobody has asked for their money back!"

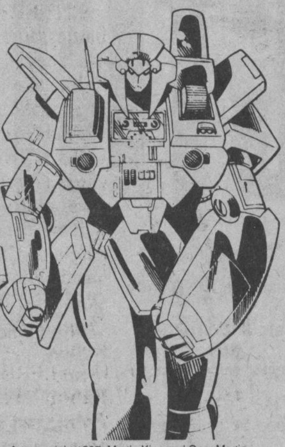


California Girls TM and © 1987 Trina Robbins.

Robbins bristles when dealers have an attitude of "Why should I even bother to sell *California Girls*?" "Okay," she says. "Did you know that over 52 percent of the potential comics reading public are *girls*? That's right, you're currently selling comics to *boys*—a minority! You could be doing more than double the business you're doing now. Young girls will start with *California Girls*, but soon they'll be coming into your store for comics like *Elfquest, Amethyst, A Distant Soil*, and, when they grow up a little, *Love and Rockets*. You, the dealer, are the one who profits."

Robbins' closing words of advice apply to any comic book title on the market today. "You can't sell *California Girls* if you don't carry it! If you ordered low and sold out, order more next time."

California Girls is a monthly comic in the deluxe black and white format and retails for $2.00. Each issue contains a special full colour paper dolls centerfold.



Art copyright 1987, Martin King and Gary Martin

Cheap Shoddy Robot Toys Invade Shops For Christmas

Sabatini Pens Parody Of *Robotech* Genre

Comics fans in need of a great stocking stuffer for their non-comics reading friends and family won't have to look too far this winter. *Cheap Shoddy Robot Toys* aren't just the perfect item of obsolescence this year—they're also a comic book!

Written by Beppe Sabatini, with art by Martin King and Gary Martin, *Cheap Shoddy Robot Toys* is, according to its author, "a light-hearted comedy-adventure involving orbiting death lasers, escalation of the nuclear cold war, famine, plague, and the death of thousands."

Editor Fred Burke was a little more specific: "You see, in the future, Reagan is serving his 19th term in office, and all the fissionable material on earth has been used up for warheads. Searching for a way to continue the arms race, the senile Reagan decides to make giant versions of his favourite Transformers-type toys. That's all. Good idea, huh?"

Shipping in late November, *Cheap Shoddy Robot Toys* will hit stores just at the height of the holiday spree of commercialism. Writer Sabatini suggests that the comic might be used by parents as an inexpensive substitute for the real robot toys. "Your kid might be screaming for some junk that costs fifty, a hundred dollars," he explains. "You could get him this full colour comic for less than two bucks. That should shut him up."

Still More Sell-Outs

Weird Tales, Hotspur, Liberty, Lost Planet Head Up The Charts

In addition to sell-outs on second printings of *Area 88* #1, *Mai* #1, and *Kamui* #3, Eclipse distribution manager Sean Deming reports that *Weird Tales* #1, *Hotspur* #1, *The Liberty Project* #2, and *Lost Planet* #1 are now unavailable from Eclipse. "A few distributors out there may still be holding copies," he says, "but our main warehouse is completely sold out."

"There continues to be a demand for early issues of our manga translations," says publisher Dean Mullaney, "and I'm currently looking at the feasibility of a third printing to satisfy fans who still want copies of those premier issues."

Sell-outs on the first two issues of both *Lost Planet* and *The Liberty Project* make this look like a very good year for new titles with the initials L.P. "They're such wildly disparate comics," says Deming, "but they're both receiving great reaction from the fans. I think *The Liberty Project* is one of the major sleepers of 1987, and *Lost Planet* is full of simply stunning artwork."

A sell-out on *Weird Tales* bodes well for the upcoming return of *Seduction of the Innocent* with *Halloween Horror* #1. "There's a consistent audience for the pre-code horror stuff that just won't quit," says Deming, "and they like having the cream of the crop recoloured and repackaged for them."

To help retailers who have gotten caught short by the rapid sell-outs on many Eclipse titles, Deming has begun sending out a tip sheet to distributors that will help them make a more informed choice when deciding what quantities to order on Eclipse titles. "If you're not one of the retailers whose distributors regularly send out copies of this tip sheet," says Deming, "just write to me at P.O. Box 1099, Forestville, CA 95436, and I'll make sure to send you a copy every month."

SHIPPING

Eclipse Comics
Shipping
September 15, 1987
Airboy #30
Kamui #9
Eclipse Extra #36
Prowler #3

Cat Yronwode's
Fit to print
F.S.

THIS IS FIT TO PRINT NUMBER 178: On the road, notepad in hand.

GROW AND STAY: We're travelling through the desert this morning and i'm thinking about some of the signs we've seen on this trip across America. For instance, have you ever noticed that Missouri is the state in which stores are most likely to abbreviate their own names on their roadside signs? Typical: "BUD'S GRO. AND STA." The abbreviations stand for "grocery store and service station." Many of these "grow and stay" signs bear the corporate logo of the Pepsi Cola company. Is there a causal link?

ACCEPTING EXCEPTIONS: The morning television shows we've been catching in motels along the way are currently revelling in a set of newly released statistics about the growing illiteracy rate in the country. They link the problem to poverty. I guess this explains the several "grow and stay" signs we've seen lately that proclaim "FOOD STAMPS EXCEPTED." Of course, if one-third of our population is functionally illiterate, many customers won't be able to read these signs anyway, much less worry about the literacy level of the shop-keepers who posted them.

LONG MAY THEY WAVE: Speaking of motels and signage, this year we've caught a new phenomenon in motel signage throughout the southern midwest and southwest. The words "AMERICAN OWNED" are now being posted on the lighted boards that usually bear such messages as "CBL TV FREE HBO" and "POOL SATL TV KING BDS." The reason for this will be obvious to those who travel the motel routes of America; the past five years have seen an alarmingly steep increase in the number of small, independent motels owned and operated by Hindustani immigrants. (In the San Francisco bay area there are about 40 of these, all owned by the Patel family, and i've been told that the Patels are accumulating holdings up and down the coast. They are currently being sued by the city of San Francisco for overcharging the city on the "welfare" rooms they rent to indigents.)

The worst thing about the spread of "Patel Motels" is their cost-cutting lack of rudimentary cleanliness. Dean and i are very easy-going travellers, but we do expect laundered sheets for our money, and we don't enjoy mildew in the shower, the aroma of stale tobacco smoke in the bedding, or broken mirrors in the bathroom. To tell the truth, we've gone out of our way to stay in "American Owned" motels.

Incidentally, the small, "American Owned" joints are often cheaper than their run-down "Patel" counterparts, probably because they are managed by older couples who are no longer making mortgage payments on their property, and who have a certain pride in keeping their "homes" nice.

SALON SIGNAGE: Isn't it odd how by unspoken mutual consent women's hair salons have weird, "cute" names? A sample from our 1987 travels: The Mane Event, The Mane Attraction, The Hairport, The Hairitage Salon, The Hair Affair, The Hair Apparent, Hair We Are, The Gallery of Hair, The Hair Depot, Hair Crafters Inc., Scissor's Palace, Shear Genius, Shear Pleasure, Shear Expressions, Kountry Kurls, Clip'n'Curl, The Clip Joint, Clear Cut, A Cut Above, Medusa's Hair Lair, Bushwackers, and The Head Hunter. The latter actually sported a painted sign depicting two bone-in-the-nose cannibals dancing around a large stewpot! Crazy!

Heading this time by **FRED ("LADY LUCK") SCHWAB.** To see YOUR name in boldface type and your art or lettering here, make FtP logos 8 1/2 inches wide by 3 inches deep and send 'em to
catherine yronwode, p.o. box 1099, forestville, calif. 95436

Nov. 1-15

COMING DISTRACTIONS!

AARDVARK ONE INTERNATIONAL

☐ PUMA BLUES #13
Story . . . . **Steven Murphy**
Art . . . . **Michael Zulli**
[$1.70 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

☐ CEREBUS #104
Story/Art . . . . **Dave Sim**
[$1.70 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

AIRCEL

The $1.50 black-and-whites: **Icarus #8, Maelstrom #7;** The $1.70 black-and-whites: Samurai #23, **Stark: Future #17.** $2.00 color releases: **Darkewood #1, Dragonring #12** and **Elflord #15.**
[All shipping in November.]

ARCHIE COMICS

75¢ titles shipping this month: **Archie #355, Archie's Pals N' Gals #195, Betty & Me #165, Everything's Archie #134, Life with Archie #265.**

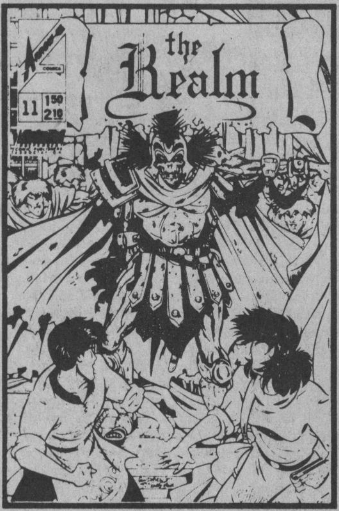
ARROW COMICS

☐ DEADWORLD #6
Our heroes are attacked by King Zombie and his killer demons.
Story . . . . **Stuart Kerr**
Art . . . . **Vincent Locke**
[$1.50 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ LEGEND LORE: TALES FROM THE REALM #1
Fantasy story with people with names like "Arrior Goldtree" and "Ramsey Frayley."
Story . . . . **Kerr & Griffith**
Art . . . . **Guy Davis**
Cover . . . . **Sandy Schreiber**
[$2.00 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ LEGEND LORE: TALES FROM THE REALM #2
Conclusion of the mini-series. The Shinde Imas attacks Hyljardin.
Story . . . . **Kerr & Schreiber**
Art . . . . **Guy Davis**
[$2.00 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ THE REALM #11
Our heroes are trapped in a village of vampires!
Story . . . . **Griffith & Kerr**
Art . . . . **Davis & Schreiber**
[$1.50 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]



ASTROBOYS PRODUCTIONS

☐ WAVE WARRIORS #1
A post-apocalyptic surfer mutant genocide comic book.
[$2.00 color comic; ships in Nov.]

BENT NAIL

☐ BLOODLORE #2
War on the ice moon of Gebbehk.
[$1.95 color comic; ships in Nov.]

BLACKTHORNE

☐ BATTLE BEASTS #1
A Hasbro toy tie-in: half-animal/half warriors who "battle for the fun of it."
Story . . . . **John Stephenson**
Art . . . . **Ice & Pacheko**
[$1.50 color comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ BATTLE FORCE #1 (of 3)
War in the 31st century—still. A *Battletech* mini-series.
Story . . . . **Jack Herman**
Art . . . . **Stan Timmons**
[$1.50 color comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ BATTLETECH #2
You have a multiple choice: suicide or death in combat.
Story . . . . **Joe Judt**
Art . . . . **Worley & J. Nelson**
[$1.50 color comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ DICK TRACY, BOOK 17
Murderous sound effects; Tracy in a death trap; Junior and Frizzletop left to drown.
Story/Art . . . . **Chester Gould**
[$6.95 trade paperback; 72-pages; ships in Nov.]

☐ DICK TRACY MONTHLY #22
Dick goes after "Empty Williams"; Sam is captured by "'Bonnie the Barber."
Story/Art . . . . **Chester Gould**
[$2.00 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ DICK TRACY MONTHLY #23
The birth of "Bonnie Braids Tracy."
Story/Art . . . . **Chester Gould**
[$2.00 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ DICK TRACY: THE "UNPRINTED" STORIES #2
One of "Flattop, Jr." 's victims becomes a ghost.
Story/Art . . . . **Chester Gould**
[$2.95 black-and-white comic; 48-pages: ships in Nov.]

☐ G.I. JOE IN 3-D #3
"The Quiet War"
Can Psyche-Out out-wit Crystal Ball?
Story . . . . **John Stephenson**
Art . . . . **Cruz & Moro**
[$2.50 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ LAUREL & HARDY IN 3-D #2
I'm sorry, Ollie, but I don't have the artist and writer on this.
[$2.50 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ OFFICIAL HOW TO DRAW ROBOTECH #10
Scott Bernanrd and his Cyclone Rider.
Art . . . . **Francis & R. Miller**
[$2.00 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ OFFICIAL HOW TO DRAW TRANSFORMERS #1

How to draw things that become other things.
Art..........**Francis & R. Miller**
[$2.00 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ SERIUS BOUNTY HUNTER #1

In the future, a serious bounty hunter, named Serius, seriously.
Story/Art..........**Evan Thomas**
[$1.75 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

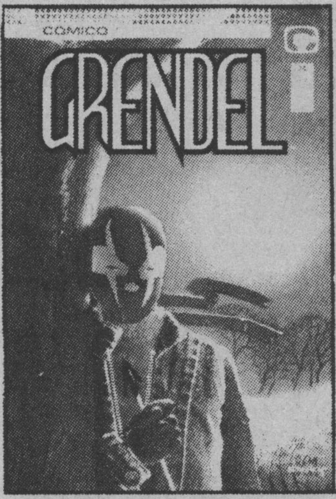
☐ WIZARDS OF THE LAST RESORT #4

Final Issue. Will the Grey Beret give up his immortality?
Story/Art............**Dok Rarity**
[$2.00 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ XENO MEN #1

"Unnatural Selection" There's nothing they can't do, including fighting a were-ape; plus the first episode of *Serius Bounty Hunter.*
Story..................**Joe Judt**
Art.........**G. Johnson & Dzon**
[$1.75 color comic; ships in Nov.]

COMICO



☐ GRENDEL #14

The truth about Grendel.
Story.............**Matt Wagner**
Art.............**Bernie Mireault**
Cover.........**Mireault & Steacy**
[$1.50 color comic; parental guidance; ships 11/6]

☐ JUSTICE MACHINE #11

"Over the Edge." Talisman fights to avenge Demon.
Story..........**Isabella & Joplin**
Art..........**Gustovich & Kieth**
[$1.50 color comic; ships 11/6]

☐ ROBOTECH, THE MACROSS SAGA #23

"Reckless." Rick hunter must save Macross City from invasion.
Story...........**Markalan Joplin**
Art..............**Leeke & Chen**
[$1.50 color comic; ships 11/6]

COMICS INTERVIEW

☐ ARISTOCRATIC XTRATERRES-

TRIAL TIME-TRAVELING THIEVES #6

The Brain Police strike. Fred & Bianca meet The Censor.
Story..............**Henry Vogel**
Art................**Mark Propst**
[$1.75 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ MICRA #6

"A New Beginning."
Story...........**Lamar Waldron**
Art..........**Ted Boothanakit**
[$1.75 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ SOUTHERN KNIGHTS #23

Aramis Merrow fights spirits who may or may not be be figments of his imagination.
Story..............**Henry Vogel**
Art................**Mark Propst**
[$1.75 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ SOUTHERN KNIGHTS #24

The head of Viper must go to the Southern Knights to save himself from an assassin.
Story..............**Henry Vogel**
Art................**Mark Propst**
[$1.75 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

CRYSTAL COMICS

☐ EAGLE #11

"Time to Die" Pushed to the limit! Orb out of control! Shock ending!
Story.............**Jack Herman**
Art............**Vokes & Rankin**
[$1.75 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

CONTINUITY COMICS

☐ SAMUREE #8

Story/Art. **Beechum, Akin, Garvey** and **C. Adams**
[$2.00 color comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ TOY BOY #3

Story/Art.....**Von Eeden, Nebres** and **Berube**
[$2.00 color comic; ships in Nov.]

C & T GRAPHICS

☐ THE FINAL MAN #1

Story..............**Tim Corrigan**
Art..............**Russ Maheras**
[$1.50 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ GERIATRICMAN #1

Senior citizen hero. Magazine size.
Story/Art.........**Chuck Blunker**
Cover...........**Allen Freeman**
[$1.75 black-and-white magazine; ships in Nov.]

☐ LEGION OF LUDICROUS HEROES #1

Super-hero parody strips by **Allen Freeman, T.M. Maple, Steve Keeter, Don Martinec** and unnamed others.
[$2.00 black-and-white magazine; ships in Nov.]

DC COMICS

☐ BATMAN #417

A man from U.S.S.R. with a list of ten marked for death. Surely, he won't kill them, because the Soviets being bad guys is so cliched and more harmful to our children than reading *Dark Knight.* (Part 1 of 4.)
Story...............**Jim Starlin**
Art............**Aparo & DeCarlo**
Cover......**Aparo & Sienkiewicz**
[75¢ color comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/3]

☐ BLUE BEETLE #22

Beetle discovers you can't go home again, unless you lived 500,000,000 years ago. (Creationists'll have fun with this one.)
Story................**Len Wein**
Art..........**Andru & Bulanadi**
[75¢ color comic; ships 11/17; newsstand o/s 12/10]

☐ CINDER & ASHE #1 (of 4)

All your problems solved—if you can afford it.
Story...........**Gerry Conway**
Art/Cover. **Jose Luis Garcia Lopez**
[$1.75 color comic; ships 11/10]

☐ FIRESTORM, THE NUCLEAR MAN #69

The Russian Firestorm wants to kill Ron, but he's busy with Zuggernaurt.
Story...........**John Ostrander**
Art..............**Joe Brozowski**
[75¢ color comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/3]

☐ FLASH #10

Chunk mad. Chunk send you to "other place."
Story..............**Mike Baron**
Art.........**Collins & Mahlstedt**
Cover............**Steve Lightle**
[75¢ color comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/3]

☐ FOREVER PEOPLE #1

The dark manipulates time & reality—a return to "yesteryear" and a hearty heigh-yo.
Story...........**J.M. DeMatteis**
Art............**Cullins & Kesel**
[$1.25 color comic; ships 11/17]

☐ GREEN ARROW#2

Concludes "The LongBow Hunters" sequel.
Story/Cover...........**Mike Grell**
Art.......**Hannigan & Giordano**
[$1.00 color comic; mature; ships 11/17]

☐ HELLBLAZER #3

Seriously, folks, demon yuppies from hell.
Story............**Jamie Delano**
Art..............**John Ridgway**
Cover.............**Dave McKean**
[$1.25 color comic; mature; ships 11/17]

☐ JUSTICE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL #11

Maxwell Lord unchained (or is it revealed?).

Story.........**Giffen & DeMatteis**
Art..........**Maguire & Gordon**
[75¢ color comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/3]

☐ LEGION OF SUPER HEROES #44

Quislet come home—his origin.

Story................**Paul Levitz**
Art..........**LaRoque & DeCarlo**
Cover.............**Steve Lightle**
[$1.75 color comic; ships 11/17; newsstand o/s 12/10]

☐ OUTCASTS #6 (of 12)

Who killed B.D.'s dad? The Sizzling Satan Brothers, of course.

Story..........**Wagner & Grant**
Art........**Kennedy & Montano**
[$1.75 color comic; ships 11/10]

☐ THE SAGA OF RA'S AL GHUL #3 (of 4)

Reprinting *Batman* #242, *Batman* #243, and a *House of Mystery* story by **Howard Post, Neal Adams,** and **Joe Orlando**.

Story.............**Denny O'Neil**
Art. .**Novick, Adams & Giordano**
[$2.50 deluxe format; ships 11/10]

☐ SECRET ORIGINS #24

Blue Devil's origin written by **Mishkin & Cohn** and drawn by **Ty Templeton**; the origin of Dr. Fate by **Roy Thomas, Bair & Downs**.

Cover.............**Don Simpson**
[$1.25 color comic; ships 11/17; newsstand o/s 12/10]

☐ SILVERBLADE #7 (of 12)

Jonathan is trapped in the role of vampire (which nobody does better than **Gene Colan**).

Story................**Cary Bates**
Art............**Colan & Mitchell**
[$1.25 color comic; ships 11/17]

☐ STAR TREK #48

Who's destroying all the Klingon warships? And what does this have to do with a bachelor party?

Story..............**Peter David**
Art..........**Sutton & Villagran**
[75¢ color comic; ships 11/17; newsstand o/s 12/10]

☐ SUPERMAN #15

The Prankster vs. Clark Kent?!

Story..............**John Byrne**
Art..............**Byrne & Kesel**
[75¢ color comic; ships 11/17; newsstand o/s 12/10]

☐ TALES OF THE TEEN TITANS #87

That ol' *NTT* #27.

Story............**Marv Wolfman**
Art..........**Gammill & Tanghal**
[$1.00 color comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/3]

☐ WORLD OF KRYPTON #4 (of 4)

Jor-el and Lara's romance by Krypton-explosion.

Story................**John Byrne**
Art...........**Mignola & Bryant**
Cover.......**Byrne & Simonson**
[75¢ color comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/3]

☐ WONDER WOMAN #14

Will Diana release Heracles, noted ravager and betrayer?

Story.............**Perez & Wein**
Art...........**Perez & Patterson**
[75¢ color comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/3]

☐ YOUNG ALL-STARS #10

Trivia Pursuit question: Who was earth first super-hero? Answer: "Iron" Munro's dad.

Story........**Thomas & Thomas**
Art..........**Murray & M. Jones**
[$1.25 color comic; ships 11/17]

ECLIPSE COMICS

☐ AIRBOY #33

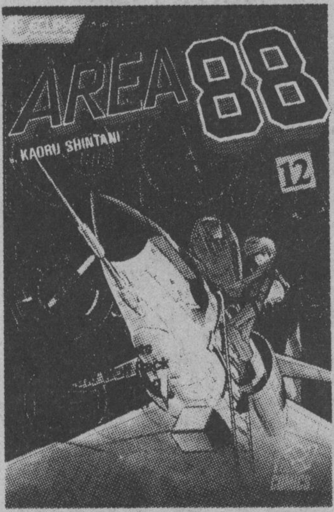
Art by the returning **Stan Woch** with **Willie Blyberg** inking, Airboy and Skywolf in a jungle adventure as Birdie is shot down. And let's not forget Valkyrie. "Wolf and the Rose" Skywolf's 1950's adventure in Arabia with the Bald Eagle concludes. Art by **Kim DeMulder** I suppose.

Stories............**Chuck Dixon**
[$1.25 comic; now monthly; ships 11/3; newsstand o/s 11/26.]

☐ AREA 88 #12

Area 88 faces the Wolf Pack!

Story/Art..........**Kaoru Shintani**
[$1.50 black-and-white comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/3]



☐ CALIFORNIA GIRLS #6

Three stories: "The Pals of Smidgens" with the return of Dr. DooMuch, love on a Hawaiian cruise in "The Two-Timer," and "My Friend Lulu."

Story/Art..........**Trina Robbins**
[$2.00 black-and-white comic; ships 11/3; newsstand 11/26]

☐ FUSION #6

Indio & crew have their ship stolen while on a shopping spree; more Weasel Patrol.

Story...........**Peter Morwood**
Art...................**Phil Foglio**
Cover..............**Ken Macklin**
[$2.00 black-and-white comic; ships 11/3; newsstands 11/26]

☐ KAMUI #12

Will deserting the island foil the watarishu? Will Kamui return?

Story/Art.........**Sanpei Shirato**
[$1.50 black-and-white comic; mature; ships 11/3; newsstand o/s 11/26]

☐ THE LIBERTY PROJECT #6

Cimarron goes solo; Valkyrie a zombie.

Story.................**Kurt Busiek**

Art..............**Richard Howell**
[$1.75 black-and-white comic; ships in 11/3; newsstand o/s 11/26]

☐ LOST PLANET #4 (of 6)

The Mysterious past of Ambrose Pierce. Penta-Hamptonian issue, with art, story and lettering by **Bo, Tracy, Bunny, Scott & Todd Hampton**.

[$2.00 color comic; ships 11/10; newsstands 12/3]

ECLIPSE COMICS
mini-series
No 4 of 6
$2.00
LOST PLANET

☐ MAI, THE PSYCHIC GIRL #12

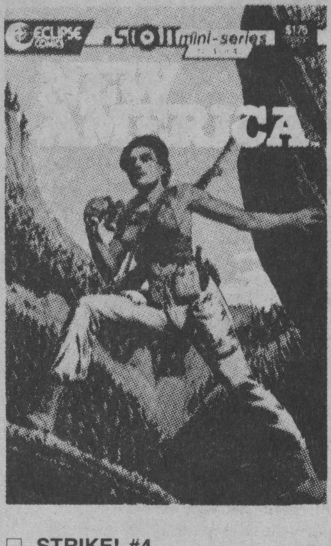
Mai surrenders to save the students, Kaieda tests her powers.

Story..............**Kazuya Kudo**
Art............**Ryoichi Ikegami**
[$1.50 black-and-white comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/3]

☐ NEW AMERICA #1 (of 4)

Spanning the dozen-year new American Civil War—establishing a basis for *Scout: War Shaman*.

Story..........**Yale & Ostrander**
Art...............**Gary Kwapisz**
[$1.50 color comic; ships 11/3; newsstand o/s 11/26]



☐ STRIKE! #4

Dennis is attacked by an exo-skeleton. Another golden age back-up as Sgt. Strike battles Nazis.

Story..............**Chuck Dixon**

Art. . . . . **Lyle & Tanghal**
[$1.75 color comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/3]

ETERNITY COMICS

☐ BLADE OF SHURIKEN #7

Kyoko is her best friend's bodyguard.
Story. . . . . **Reggie Byers**
Art. . . . . **Robert Durham**
[$1.95 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ NINJA #10

The Suiciders and the KGB both want a defecting Soviet general.
Story. . . . **Henderson & P. Palmer**
Art. . . . . **Farrell & Ritter**
[$1.95 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ PIRATE CORP$ #4

Planet-sized party on Calico. Crewman contemplates suicide.
Story/Art. . . . . **Evan Dorkin**
[$1.95 color comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ PELLESTAR #3 (of 4)

Brian Morrell discovers his powers.
Story. . . . . **Peter Palmer**
Art. . . . . **Richard Case**
[$1.95 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ RETROGRADE #1

Military munitions expert John Warner (previously Elizabeth Taylor's husband) is head of a government project to create paranormals.
Story. . . . . **Greg Kendricks**
Art. . . . . **Frank Turner**
[$1.95 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ SCARLET IN GASLIGHT #1

19th century England, Sherlock Holmes, killer deadlier than Jack the Ripper.
Story. . . . . **Martin Powell**
Art. . . . . **Seppo Mukinen**
[$1.95 black-and-white comic; mature; ships in Nov.]

☐ SHANGHAIED: THE SAGA OF THE BLACK KITE #4

Revenge at any cost.
Story. . . . . **Tony Hutz**
Art. . . . . **Helmers & Raush**
[$1.50 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ SHURIKEN TEAM-UP #3

Unholy demons from hell make life tough for our heroes.
Story. . . . . **Marshall & Byers**
Art. . . . . **Barral**
[$1.95 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

FANTACO

☐ GORE SHRIEK #3

"Rest in Pieces" by **Chas. Balun**, "Pain" by **Rolf Stark**, "Idle Hands" by **Bruce Fuller**, "Mall Rats" by **Bill Townsend & Grep Capulto**. Cover by **Chas. Balun**.
[$1.50 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

FANTAGOR PRESS

☐ CHILDREN OF FIRE #1

New **Rich Corben** comic. Three-issue series.
[$2.00 color comic; ships in Nov.]

FICTION INK

☐ REALITY TO FICTION #1

Anthology title. "Code Name: The Champion" by **Chris Batista** and **Gibron K. Brown**, "Blood Wolf" by **Tom Maresca** with art by **Philip Haynes**, and "The Law" by **Bostic** and **M. Little**.
[$2.50 color comic; ships in Nov.]

FIRST COMICS

☐ AMERICAN FLAGG! #50

Howard Chaykin writes the last issue (volume one). Expect sex and violence in large quantities. Art by **Mike Vosburg**.
[$1.75 color comic; ships 11/11]

First
MAR 1988
33
$1.75
BADGER

☐ THE BADGER #33

The B. meets Kid Kang with Kung Fu.
Story. . . . . **Mike Baron**
Art. . . . . **Lim & Nichols**
Cover. . . . . **Mike Zeck**
[$1.75 color comic; ships 10/30]

☐ DREADSTAR #35

"Lastlaugh." A massacre at an orphanage.
Story. . . . . **Jim Starlin**
Art. . . . . **McDonnell & Mayerik**
[$1.75 color comic; ships 10/30]

☐ EVANGELINE #6

A conspiracy within the Church.
Story. . . . . **Charles Dixon**
Art. . . . . **Tereno & Villagran**
[$1.75 color comic; ships 10/30]

☐ GRIMJACK #44

The Shadow Wars. Havoc in Cynosure.
Story. . . . . **John Ostrander**
Art. . . . . **Tom Mandrake**
[$1.75 color comic; ships 11/6]

The Ice King of Oz
by Eric Shanower
First Graphic Novel

☐ THE ICE KING OF OZ

Dorothy et al. go on a voyage through the Ice King's lands.
Story/Art. . . . . **Eric Shanower**
[$7.95 color 48-page comic; ships 10/30]

☐ LONE WOLF & CUB #7

A young girl sold into prostitution is freed by Ogami.
Story. . . . . **Kazuo Koike**
Art. . . . . **Goseki Kojima**
Cover/Intro. . . . . **Frank Miller**
[$1.95 black-and-white comic; mature; ships in Nov.]

☐ NEXUS #42

Nexus and Judah will return to the bowl-shaped world.
Story. . . . . **Mike Baron**
Art. . . . . **Rude & Nyberg**
[$1.75 color comic; ships 10/30]

☐ PSYCHOBLAST #5

Mystery deepens. (Don't they always?)
Story. . . . . **Steven Grant**
Art. . . . . **Phipps & Vey**
[$1.75 color comic; ships 11/6]

GENESIS WEST

☐ THE LAST OF THE VIKING HEROES #4

The vikings are heroic. Back-up, "The Phantom Force." First of **Jack Kirby** inker reunion issues.
Story/Art **Thibodeaux & Theakston**
Cover. . . . . **Howard Chaykin**
[$1.75 color comic; ships in Nov.]

GLADSTONE COMICS

☐ DONALD DUCK #262

"Donald's Cousin Gus" by **Al Taliaferro**, a Danish short, a 10-pager by **Carl Barks**.

[95¢ color comic; ships 11/24; newsstand o/s 12/18]

☐ MICKEY & DONALD #1

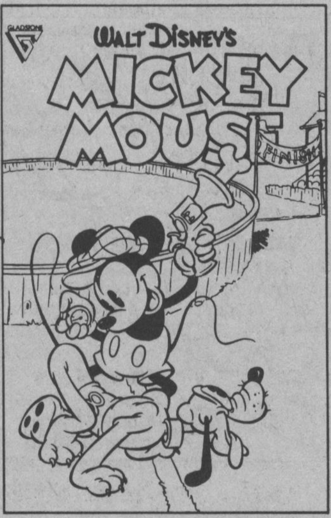
Stories by **Paul Murry and Don Rosa**, and the reprinting of the 1949 Firestone give-away by **Carl Barks** and **Bill Wright**.

[95¢ color comic; ships 11/24; newsstand o/s 12/18]

☐ MICKEY MOUSE #235

"Pluto the Racer" (part 1) by **Floyd Gottfredson**. Cover by **Daan Jippes**.

[95¢ color comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/4]


GLADSTONE
WALT DISNEY'S
MICKEY MOUSE
FINISH

☐ WALT DISNEY'S COMICS & STORIES #527

Stories by **Freddy Milton, Carl Barks, Paul Murry**. Cover by Barks.

[95¢ color comic; ships 11/17; newsstand o/s 12/11]

HANTHERCRAFT

☐ TANDRA: ANDELKRAG 2 Book 9B

Salindale falls to Dragonrok. Luckily, Galon's hidden the city'sa wealth in the sky island.

Story/Art. . . . . **Hanther**

[$1.95 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

HARVEY COMICS

- ☐ **CASPER THE FRIENDLY GHOST #239:** *$1.00*
- ☐ **HOLIDAY DIGEST #1:** *$1.25*
- ☐ **RICHIE RICH AND. . . DOLLAR DOG #3:** *$1.00*
- ☐ **RICHIE RICH DIGEST #12:** *$1.25*
- ☐ **SPOTLITE: LITTLE AUDREY #4:** *$1.00*

[All ship in Nov.]

HERO COMICS

All of these were listed as coming out in October but actually they're coming out in November. You know how it is.

☐ CAPTAIN THUNDER AND BLUE BOLT #5

The Grim Reaper tries to reap Captain Thunder.

Story. . . . . **R & D Thomas**
Art. . . . . **Miehm & Barras**

[$1.95 color comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ CHAMPIONS #5

Foxbat, Pulsar and Exo-Skeleton Man fight the heroes.

Story. . . . . **Dennis Mallonnee**
Art. . . . . **Marrinan & Barras**

[$1.95 color comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ ETERNITY SMITH #5

Concluding last issue's story.

Story. . . . . **Dennis Mallonnee**
Art. . . . . **Tim Burgard**

[$1.95 color comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ THE MARKSMAN #1

Marksman's origin.

Story. . . . . **Steve Perrin**
Art. . . . . **McDonnell & Janes**

And a Rose story.

Story. . . . . **Dennis Mallonnee**
Art. . . . . **Davis & Barras**

[$1.95 color comic; ships in Nov.]

JABBERWOCKY GRAPHIX

☐ GOODIES #42

"Tales of New Pluto" by **Dennis Stahl** and "Adeline Bovine" by **Mack White**; plus many other illustrations.

Cover. . . . . **Lee Burks**

[$2.00 black-and-white mini-comic; mature; ships in Nov.]

DEATH RATTLE

KITCHEN SINK PRESS

☐ DEATH RATTLE #13

Triskaidekaphobic's delight: good luck issue. Another "Bulto" chapter by **Jaxon**; "The Voices in my Head," by **P.S. Mueller** and **Bill Hartwig**; "Little Magic" by **Nick Petras**, art by **Joseph Schmough**; and **Edgar Allan Poe**'s "Masque of the Red Death" by **Daryl Hutchinson**.

Cover. . . . . **Robert Burger**

[$2.00 black-and-white comic; mature; ships in Nov.]

☐ SPIRIT #37

Halloween treat: "Ellen Meets Hazel," "Plaster of Paris," "The Chapparell Lode," and "Quirte."

Story/Art. . . . . **Will Eisner**

[$2.00 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

MAD DOG GRAPHICS

☐ EDDY CURRENT #4

No one escapes from the Mad Nun; rock music listener mind control.

Story/Art. . . . . **Ted McKeever**

[$2.00 black-and-white comic; mature; ships in Nov.]

MALIBU COMICS

☐ BONES #4

Yo-ho, yo-ho a pirate's life for me. Seymour meets Long John Ugly.

Story. . . . . . **Paul Ryan O'Connor**
Art. . . . . **Carson & Mowry**

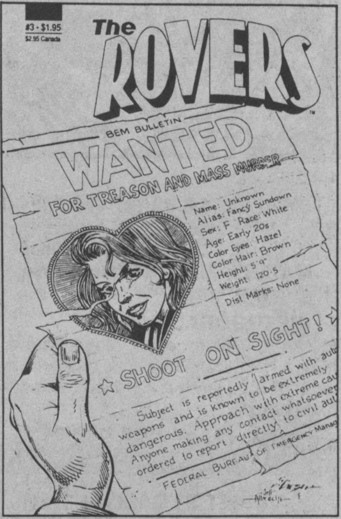
[$1.95 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ THE OUTLANDER #2

Gallow's right hand is fixed with an exo-skeleton with these long Adamantium claws. . .not really.

Story. . . . . **Scott Finley**
Art. . . . . **Brooks Hagan**

[$1.95 black-and-white comic; mature; ships in Nov.]


#3 · $1.95
$2.95 Canada
The ROVERS
BEM BULLETIN
WANTED
FOR TREASON AND MASS MURDER
Name: Unknown
Alias: Fancy Sundown
Sex: F Race: White
Age: Early 20s
Color Eyes: Hazel
Color Hair: Brown
Height: 5'9"
Weight: 120.5
Dist Marks: None
SHOOT ON SIGHT!
Subject is reportedly armed with aut
weapons and is known to be extremely
dangerous. Approach with extreme cau
Anyone making any contact whatsoever
ordered to report directly to civil au
FEDERAL BUREAU OF EMERGENCY Manag

☐ THE ROVERS #3

The Kid and Special Ed meet Fancy Sundwon, who's wanted dead or. . . nothing.

Story. . . . . **S.A. Bennett**
Art. . . . . **Bieser & Roberts**

[$1.95 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ STEALTH FORCE #5

Lujack's slated for execution by machine gun: *Budda-budda-buddah!*

Story. . . . . **Mike Valerio**
Art. . . . . **Ollife & Garcia**

[$1.95 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ THE TROUBLE WITH GIRLS #4

The origin of Girls. I always wondered... Hopefully nothing about ribs.

Story........**Jacobs & G. Jones**

Art..........**Hamilton & Garcia**

[$1.95 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

MARVEL COMICS

☐ ALF #1

Three stories of the Melmacian; one a flashback to his days on his homeworld. Watch your cat. No relation to below title.

Story.........**Michael Gallagher**

Art.........**H. Post & Roettcher**

[$1.00 color comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/3]

☐ ALPHA FLIGHT #56

Thanksgiving guest star: Gobblin'...er, Goblyn.

Story................**Bill Mantlo**

Art..................**Jim Lee**

[$1.00 color comic; ships 11/10]

☐ AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #298

A chance villain (or is it the villain: Chance). New artists.

Story..........**David Michelinie**

Art.......**MacFarlane & McLeod**

[75¢ color comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/3]

☐ CAPTAIN AMERICA #339

Part of the Fall of the Mutants saga, involving Nomad, D-Man, the Falcon and...X-Factor against Famine of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse!

Story..........**Mark Gruenwald**

Art.....**Kieron Dwyer & Morgan**

[75¢ color comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/3]

☐ CONAN THE KING #45

Prince Kidd connapped.

Story...................**Kraar**

Art...........**Docherty & Bator**

[$1.25 color comic; ships 11/3; newsstand o/s 11/26]

☐ DAREDEVIL #252

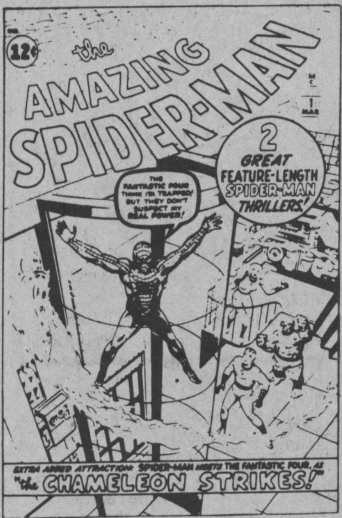
Part of the Fall of the Mutants saga, with X-Factor and War of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

Story.............**Ann Nocenti**

Art....**Romita, Jr. & Williamson**

[75¢ color comic; ships 11/3; newsstand o/s 11/26]

☐ MARVEL MASTERWORKS—SPIDER-MAN


12¢
the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
MC
1
MAR
THE FANTASTIC FOUR THINK I'M TRAPPED! BUT THEY DON'T SUSPECT MY REAL POWER!
2 GREAT FEATURE-LENGTH SPIDER-MAN THRILLERS!
EXTRA ADDED ATTRACTION: SPIDER-MAN MEETS THE FANTASTIC FOUR, AS "the CHAMELEON STRIKES!"

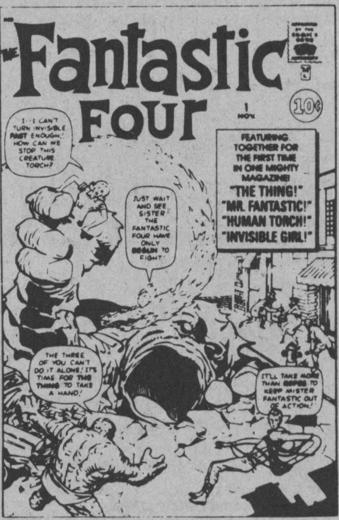
Quality reprinting of *Amazing Fantasy* #15 and *Spider-Man* #s 1-10. Includes introduction by **Stan Lee** and biographies of **Lee** and **Steve Ditko**.

[$29.95 full-airbrush color book; ships 11/03]

☐ MARVEL MASTERWORKS—FANTASTIC FOUR

Quality reprinting of *Fantastic Four* #s 1-10. Includes biographies of **Stan Lee** and **Jack Kirby**.

[$29.95 full-airbrush color book; ships 11/10]


THE Fantastic Four
1
NOV
10¢
I--I CAN'T TURN INVISIBLE FAST ENOUGH! HOW CAN WE STOP THIS CREATURE TORCH?
JUST WAIT AND SEE, SISTER! THE FANTASTIC FOUR HAVE ONLY BEGUN TO FIGHT!
FEATURING. TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ONE MIGHTY MAGAZINE! "THE THING!" "MR. FANTASTIC!" "HUMAN TORCH!" "INVISIBLE GIRL!"
THE THREE OF YOU CAN'T DO IT ALONE! IT'S TIME FOR THE THING TO TAKE A HAND!
IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN ROPES TO KEEP MISTER FANTASTIC OUT OF ACTION!

☐ MOEBIUS GRAPHIC NOVEL #4

Includes "The Long Tomorrow," a detective story set in the future, written by **Dan O'Bannon**, who wrote, among other things, *Alien*.

Story/Art..............**Moebius**

[$9.95 Graphic Novel; 72-pages; ships 11/10]

☐ THE NEW MUTANTS #61

A solemn graduation day, overshadowed by the death of a New Mutant and the X-Men. Fall of the Mutant saga concludes.

Story.............**L. Simonson**

Art............**Blevins & Austin**

[75¢ color comic; ships 11/3; newsstand o/s 11/26]

☐ PSI-FORCE #17

Introducing the villainous trio of Rodstvow, Troublemaker, and Imprint.

Story...........**Fabian Nicieza**

Art...................**Ron Lim**

[75¢ color comic; ships 11/3; newsstand o/s 11/26]

☐ SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #145

Story.............**Chuck Dixon**

Art............**Kwapisz & Chan**

Cover...............**Joe Jusko**

[$2.00 black-and-white magazine; ships 11/10]

☐ SOLO AVENGERS #4

"The Great Escape" starring Hawkeye by **Tom DeFalco**, with art by **Bright & Rubinstein**; Black Knight battles a future successor written **Roger Stern** art by **Ryan & Layton**.

[75¢ color comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/3]

☐ SPELLBOUND #4 (of 6)

The New Mutants make a guest appearance, but according to the official scorecard, this is not part of the Fall of the Mutants saga.

Story.........**Louise Simonson**

Art.........**Shoemaker & Potts**

Cover.....**Shoemaker & Wiacek**

[$1.50 color comic; ships 11/3; newsstand o/s 11/26]

☐ SPIDER-MAN DIGEST #8

Spider-Man #s 74-76.

Story.................**Stan Lee**

Art............**Romita & Mooney**

[$1.50 digest-sized comic; ships 11/10]

☐ STRANGE TALES II #12

"Blue Skies"

Someone's interested in Cloak and Dagger: the Kingpin and the Punisher, but who's on whose side? Also: Night & Day. Written by **Terry Austin**, art by **Portacio & Wiacek**.

"Make Thee Mightier Yet"

Dr. Strange has sunk to stealing magic. Lady Victoria Bentley returns. **Peter Gillis** drawn by **Lawlis & Embelin**.

Cover..........**Whilce Portacio**

[75¢ color comic; ships 11/10; newsstand o/s 12/3]

☐ STRIKEFORCE: MORITURI #16

First appearance of famous Monster Morituri.

Story................**Peter Gillis**

Art.......**Portacio & S. Williams**

[$1.00 color comic; ships 11/3]

☐ TALES OF G.I. JOE #2

G.I. Joe #3 reprints.

Story...............**Larry Hama**

Art...**Trimpe, Abel & D'Agostino**

[$1.50 baxter color comic; 32-pages; no ads; ships 11/3]

☐ WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #36

Electricity turns a young boy into Phreak!

Story............**Gerry Conway**

Art.....**Saviuk & Keith Williams**

[75¢ color comic; ships 11/3; newsstand o/s 11/26]

☐ WEST COAST AVENGERS #30

Fill-in issue.

[75¢ color comic; ships 11/3; newsstand o/s 11/26]

MARVEL EPIC COMICS

☐ GROO #37

Why, isn't that Groo? It is!

Story.......**Aragones & Evanier**

Art............**Sergio Aragones**

[$1.00 color comic; ships 11/10]

☐ VIDEO JACK #3

Jack visits Mayberry and meets Barney Fife.

Story................**Cary Bates**

Art................**Giffen & Hunt**

[$1.25 color comic; ships 11/10]

MARVEL STAR COMICS

☐ HEATHCLIFF'S FUNHOUSE #6

Heathcliff and Iggy's trip through a Glumm Brother's fairytale.

Story................**DeCesare**

Art.........**Kremer & Roettcher**

[$1.00 color comic; ships 11/03; newsstand o/s 11/26]

☐ MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE #12

An imaginary story of the future without He-Man. I hope it's imaginary.

Story...............**Caragonne**

Art...........**Wilson & Bulandi**

Cover . . . . **Ron Frenz**
[$1.00 color comic; ships 11/3; newsstand o/s 11/26]

☐ THUNDERCATS #21
Herculus baby vs. the Evil Mutants. (Not part of Fall of the Mutants storyline.)
Story . . . . **Zimmerman**
Art . . . . **Mooney & Esposito**
[$1.00 color comic; ships 11/3; newsstand o/s 11/26]

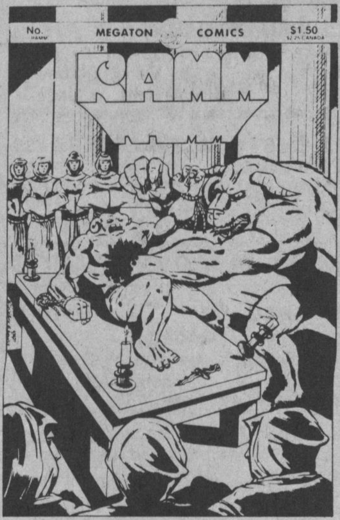
ME COMIX

☐ CORBAN THE BARBEARIAN #4
Story/Art . . . . **Phil Greene**
[$1.50 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ DEATHRAY #1
Story/Art . . . . **Phil Greene**
[$1.50 black-and-white comic; ships in Nov.]

MEGATON COMICS

☐ RAMM #3
What's worse than being mistaken for a demon by devil worshippers? How about being mistaken for Ronald Reagan? Both happen.
Story . . . . **Lee Dolezal**
Art . . . . **Chris Ecker**
[$1.50 color comic; ships in Nov.]



☐ VANGUARD: OUTPOST EARTH #2
"MayDay In Moscow"
Story . . . . **Gary Carlson**
Art . . . . **S. Adams & Matthew**
[$1.50 color comic; ships in Nov.]

MIRAGE STUDIOS

☐ TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES #13
Story/Art . . . . **Eastman & Laird**
[$1.50 black-and-white comic; wraparound cover; ships in Nov.]

NBM

☐ WASH TUBBS & CAPT. EASY Vol. 2 1925-1926
Wash joins the circus and more adventures.
Story/Art . . . . **Roy Crane**
[$16.95 paperback; $32.50 hardback; 11" x 8½"; ships in Nov.]

NEW COMICS GROUP

☐ DEADTIME STORIES #1
Anthology with stories by **Tom Yeates** and **Norm Breyfogle**. Cover by **Steve Bissette**.
[$1.75 black-and-white comic; mature; ships in Nov.]

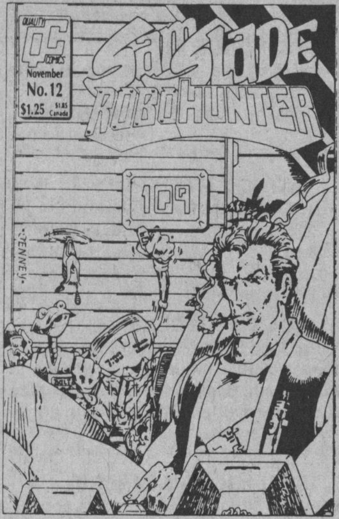
☐ YOUNG MASTER #1
Walking the way of the warrior is weawying.
Story . . . . **Larry Hama**
Art . . . . **Val Mayerik**
[$1.75 black-and-white color comic; ships in Nov.]

QUALITY COMICS

☐ BALLAD OF HALO JONES #3
As hostess aboard "The Clara Pandy," Halo meets the navigator—dolphin Kitirik Tikrikitit.
Story . . . . **Alan Moore**
Art . . . . **Ian Gibson**
[$1.25 color comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ JUDGE DREDD #12
"The Starborn Thing" attaches itself to Dredd's throat and the chokes on him.
Story/Art . . . . . **T.B. Grover, Carlos Ezquerra, & Kim Raymond**
[$1.25 color comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ ROGUE TROOPER #12
R.T. is wounded in "Milli-Com Memories" and must obey orders even when the source is questionable.
Story/Art **Findley-Day, C. Kennedy, & Brett Ewins**
Cover . . . . **Tom Grindberg**
[$1.25 color comic; ships in Nov.]



☐ SAM SLADE—ROBO-HUNTER #12
Jim Kidd a mean adult in a 1-year old's body.
Story . . . . **Alan Grant**
Art . . . . **Ian Gibson**
[$1.25 color comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ SLAINE THE BESERKER #5
Roping a stud dragon; plus, the Roman warrior Black Hawk in alien environ by **Alvin Gaunt**.
Story . . . . **Pat Mills**
Art on both . . . . **M. Belardinelli**
Cover . . . . **Tom Grindberg**
[$1.25 color comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ SPELLBINDERS #10
Even at the end of the world, people want revenge.
Story . . . . **Pat Mills**
Art . . . . **Bryan Talbot**
Cover . . . . **Tom Grindberg**
[$1.25 color comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ STRONTIUM DOG #5
Traveling to the Island of the Dead to bring someone back to life; for sports fans "The Killing" annual event on the planet Zed.
Story . . . . **Alan Grant**
Art . . . . **Carlos Ezquerra**
Cover . . . . **Tom Grindberg**
[$1.25 color-comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ TIME TWISTERS #3
"The Wages of Sin!" are part of the curriculum at a school for villains; "Fill It Up!" may not mean what you think.
Story . . . . **Alan Moore**
Art . . . . **Bryan Talbot**
[$1.25 color comic; ships in Nov.]

☐ 2000 AD PRESENTS #18
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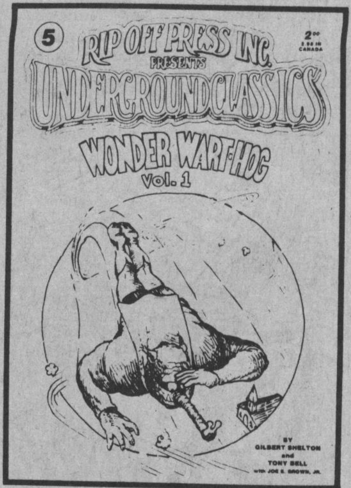

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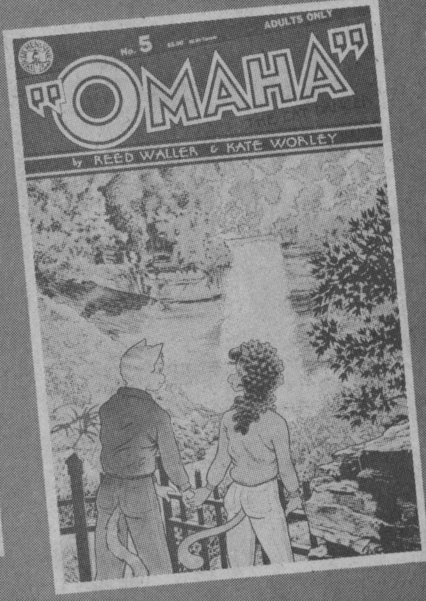
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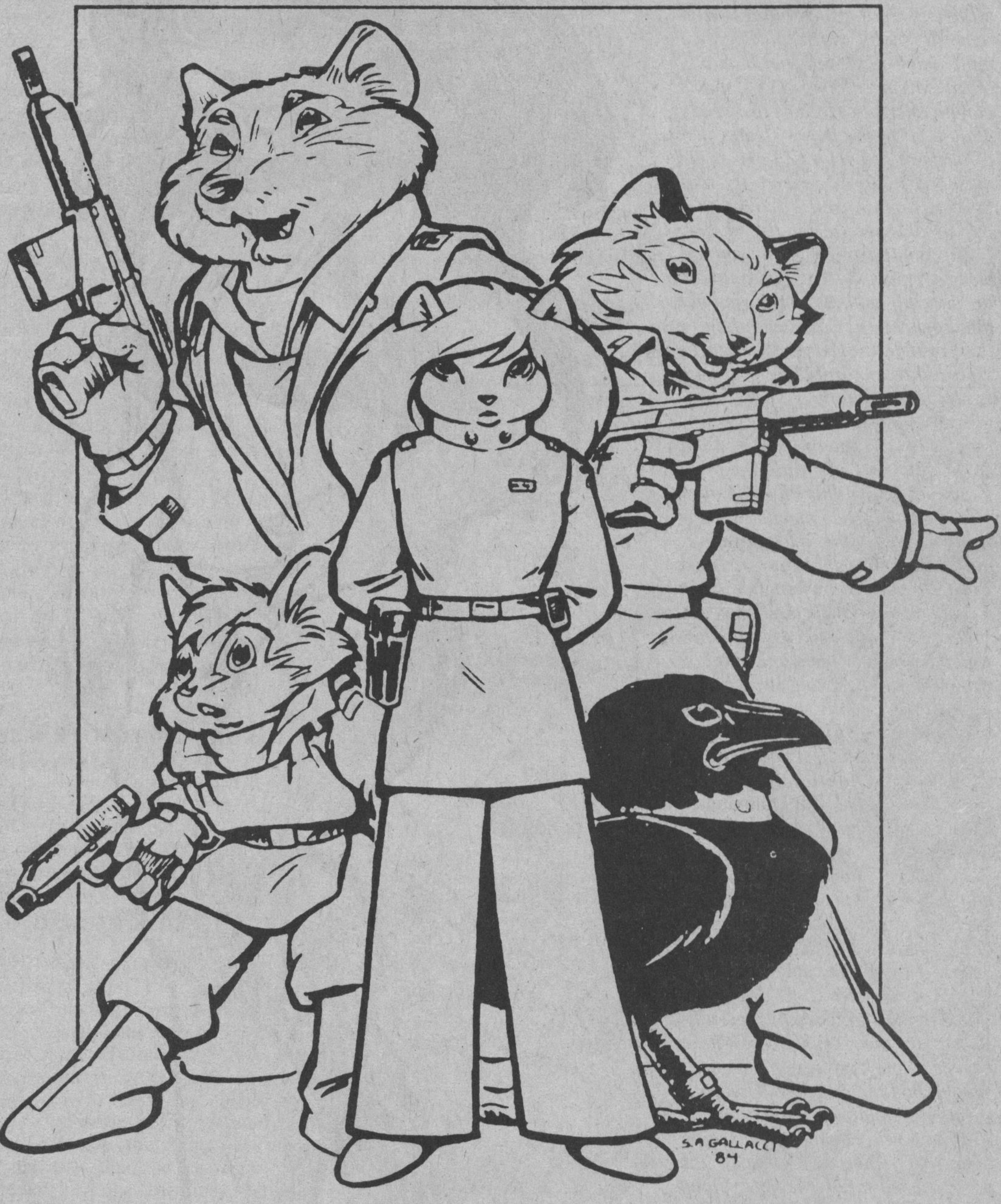
STEVE GALLACCI



AN INTERVIEW

by Edd Vick

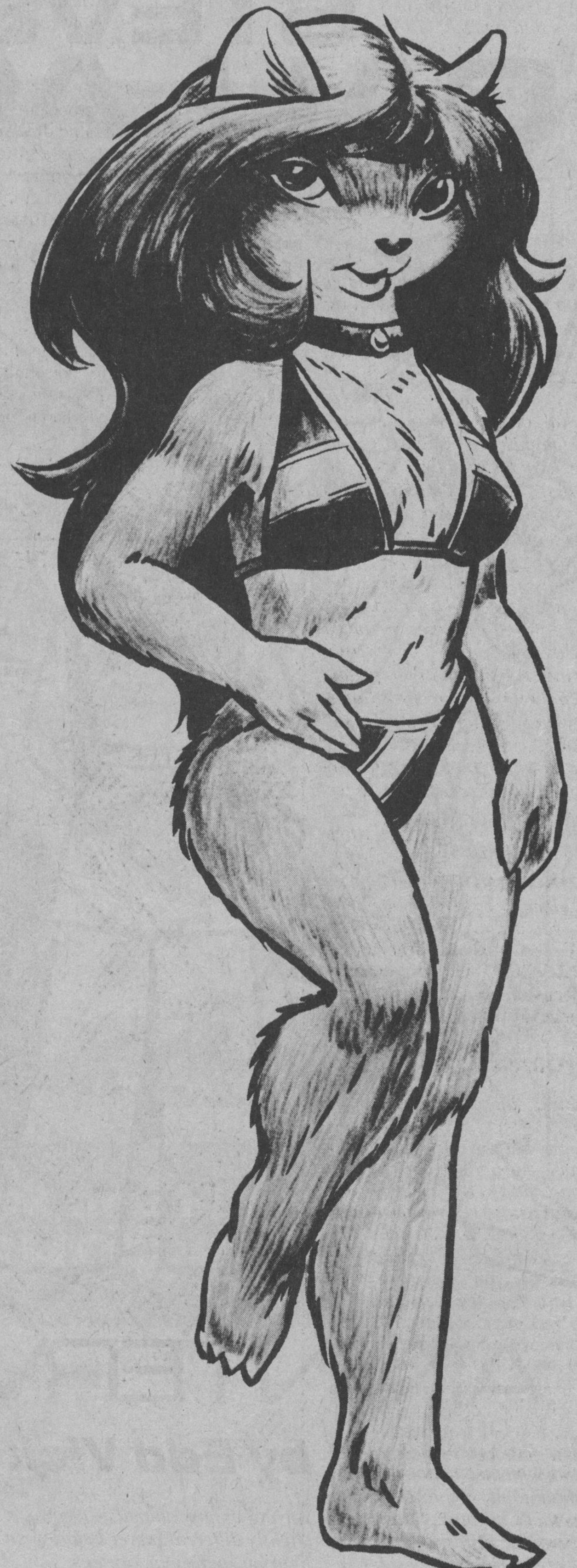
Steve Gallaci's entire body of work seems to hang together better than do most comics artists'. Perhaps that's because, though he's worked on four different comics so far, all of them have—besides involving funny animals—thrown a slightly different, never before seen light on anthropomorphics.

Chances are, if you name any funny-animal strip, cartoon, or book, it'll fall into one of two categories. The first takes place in an analogue of our modern (or historical) world. Characters drive *cars, shoot guns, and kowtow to authorities that are meant to remind the reader or viewer of his present or past circumstances. Barks's ducks chased the almighty dollar and searched for Cibola in a world that would be ours if people had duckbills. Bugs Bunny exists in a milieu of rifle-toting hunters and operatic snobs whose talking animals might as well be humans, albeit extremely loony ones. Japan's canine Sherlock Holmes is directly analogous to the Doyle sleuth, just as our own Inspector Gill makes the most of the gumshoe's territory, and Spider-Ham is—well, I'll leave that one as an exercise for the reader.*

The other type of funny animal story attempts to treat wild animals in natural settings, adding only intelligence. They act according to their own natures, or to the natures ever-anthropomorphizing humans lend them from their own repertoires. The fox is sly, the grasshopper is lazy, the owl is wise, and so on. Still and all, while I enjoy a good example of this class of story just as much as I do the many excellent examples of the first type above, the fact remains that they act in a world dominated by humans, or in a vacuum where their intelligence is spent in small successes. They would be exactly the same animals without sentience, and would operate in the same manner, sans morals and interracial friendships. Aesop was the earliest known practitioner of these stories, but modern equivalents include 101 Dalmatians, Curious George, *and* The Jungle Book.

To find genuine attempts to treat animals with intelligence as, say alien sentients instead of as humans or as animals, you have to dig pretty deeply. Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH *by Robert C. O'Brien and* The Architect of Sleep *by Steven R. Boyett are two examples. Within comics the pickings are slim as well: Vaughn Bode. . .and Steve Gallacci.*

An ex-graphics specialist for the Air Force who came near to seeing action in Teheran, Gallacci has parlayed his three interests, funny animals, politics and technology, into four science fiction stories currently available in comics. "Erma Felna, EDF" tells the story of a young feline career officer in the space forces of a multi-racial Confederation. Resourceful and intelligent, she has survived several adventures in the pages of Albedo, *currently available in reprint form in the first two issues of* Command



Review *from Gallacci's own Thoughts and Images. "Birthright," where his work next appeared, told of young Prince Alfon and his attempt to regain his usurped kingdom. Two serialized episodes have appeared in Fantagraphics'* Critters, *culminating in the escape of Alfon and the fox-girl he loves from their planet.* Zell, Sworddancer, *another Thoughts and Images title, has been plagued by production and funding problems, but should reappear later this year with the continuing quest of a martial/performing artist for her sword in a science fantasy setting. Eclipse's* Fusion, *brainchild of Lex Nakashima and Steve Barnes, is the tale of the crew of the starship Tsunami. It is roughed out by Gallacci, under Lela Dowling's finishes, and is the first book with his work to treat a multiracial cast which includes humans as well as bioengineered animals.*

Perhaps you could imagine humans in place of the animals in some of the stories above, but I believe it would weaken their structures, making them rather pedestrian space operas or sword-and-sorcery tales. What "Erma Felna" and "Birthright" at least are is far more—tales that combine the strength of allegory with the excitement of science fiction.

—EDD VICK

AMAZING HEROES: *First off, how do you pronounce your last name? I'll try to write it down phonetically.*

STEVE GALLACCI: I pronounce it GU''-LO'-CHE, but that's amazingly subjective. Everyone in my family pronounces it differently.

History/Background

AH: *You've said in* Albedo *that you started drawing funny animals because you didn't think you could draw acceptable humans. Now with Indio Tremaine and Dow Cook (two characters in* Fusion*) you've taken a step toward a humans-only comic. Any plans on taking that final step?*

GALLACCI: You've got to keep in mind first that the characters are drawn by Lela (Dowling). I might block them in roughly, but she's the one who does the final work. I can draw people better (than before), but it still takes an inordinate amount of time and they all look alike, so it'll be a long time before I do people.

AH: *So you'll stick with animals for the moment.*

GALLACCI: Yeah, although I might design stuff for other people to do the finished work on.

AH: *Obviously, working as a graphics specialist for the Air Force honed your skill at drawing mecha. How else did it prepare you for putting your own comics out?*

GALLACCI: It didn't help with the mecha very much at all, because I already did that. I was a rabid drawer of hardware ever since I was a little kid, but what the Air Force did was give me a good background in graphics, because an Air Force graphics specialist had to be able to do any kind of graphics: sign painting, art for television, movie making—any kind of reproed visual aid, anything. So I did a lot of paste-up, layout, design work, learned how to do things for repro; it got me a good background, so I could walk into a TV studio or print shop and do whatever had to be done.

AH: *Did you work on any animation projects?*

GALLACCI: No, but I was technically supposed to know the basics so I could make a reasonable start at it.

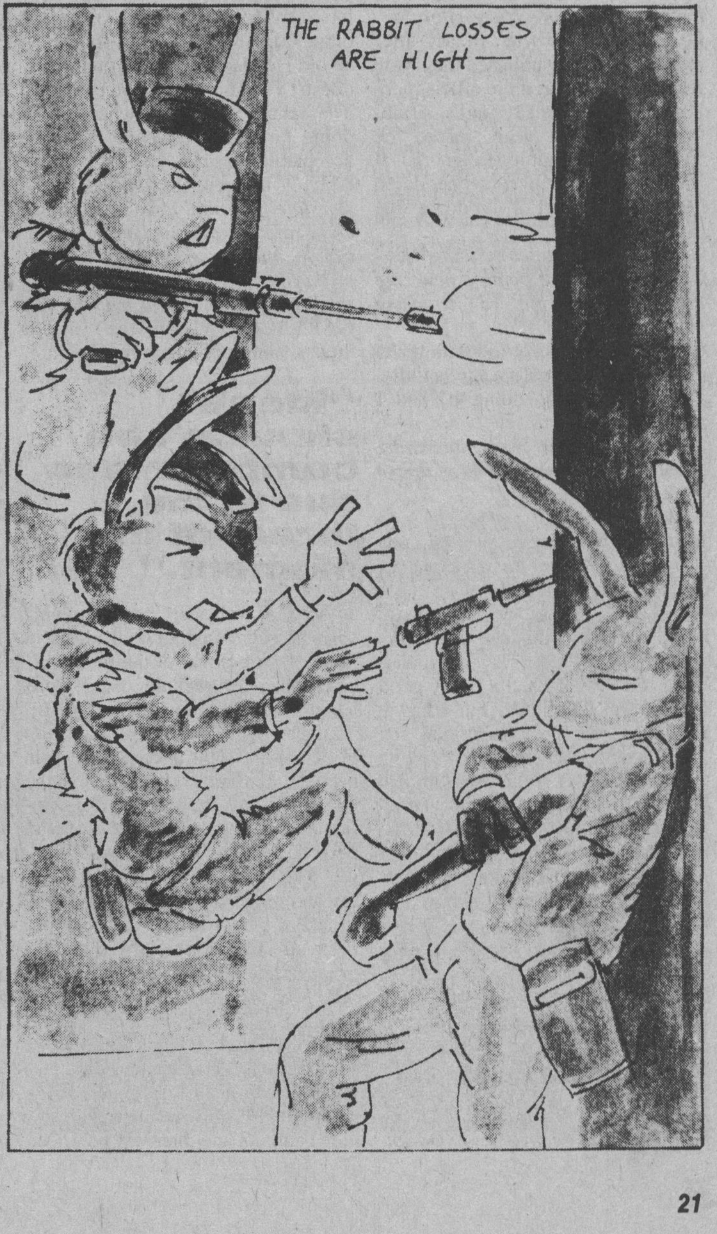
AH: *You also edited* Westwind, *the news fanzine of the Northwest Science Fiction Society. For how long?*

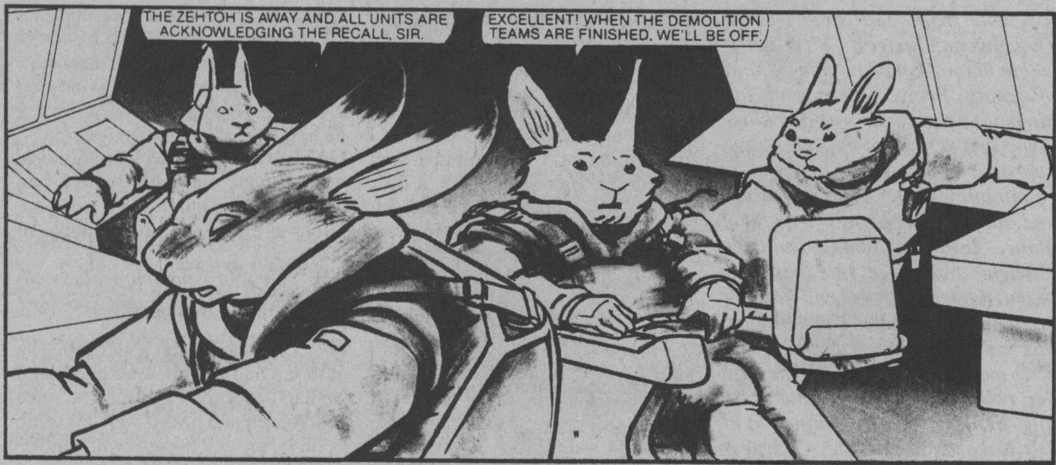
GALLACCI: I only technically edited it for about six issues but I had assisted the editors with paste-up, layout and art on it for a couple of years.

AH: *Were your issues particularly different from the issues that had gone before?*

GALLACCI: We did a nice job. The paste-up and layouts were good, and we had better than average art, since Bill Warren and myself were available to fill in any empty spots with on-the-spot illustrations. We did get together some interesting articles. One of them was a three-parter discussing, back in the early '80s, the probabilities both

From *Albedo* #0: Early art by Gallacci.


THE RABBIT LOSSES ARE HIGH—


THE ZEHTOH IS AWAY AND ALL UNITS ARE ACKNOWLEDGING THE RECALL, SIR.
EXCELLENT! WHEN THE DEMOLITION TEAMS ARE FINISHED, WE'LL BE OFF.

Rabbits are Republicans, or didn't you know? From *Albedo #2*.

of the kinds and impacts of a Shuttle disaster. This was long before it was popular to think of such things.

AH: *Did your scenario include the toning down of the space effort?*

GALLACCI: Oh yeah. In fact, after the articles were published they were referred to in other, more official publications for awhile afterwards. Again, this was several years before the Shuttle disaster, but it was ignored. It was the first time someone dared broach the subject of the down side of the Shuttle.

AH: *What did you learn doing* Westwind, *besides that being a newszine editor was not the way to make money?*

GALLACCI: I never did it to make money. It was simply a fan activity. They needed help doing it, and I helped.

AH: *So did you learn something about doing the editing end of things there?*

GALLACCI: No.

AH: Albedo *#1, it says in #2, was written in 1978, and finally came out in 1983. Why the delay?*

GALLACCI: If you ever saw any of my sketches of what the characters and art looked like in '78, you'd understand. Back then I had a pretty good idea of what I wanted, but I hadn't been doing much real cartooning art. Like I said before, I'd been drawing technical-type stuff almost from day one, but drawing consistent characters, cartoon or otherwise, was difficult. It took a long time. In '78 I started from scratch trying to do cartoons, and it takes years to learn how to do it adequately.

AH: *1978. Was that when you were over in Germany?*

GALLACCI: Yeah. I was stationed in Ramstein, West Germany.

Albedo/Erma Felna, EDF

AH: *The Republican rabbits in "Erma Felna" seem to be pretty evil. Do you think a vile enemy is necessary to good drama?*

GALLACCI: Actually, they aren't terribly evil. It's just that so far the story has only looked at them from the other side's point of view. To borrow an old Heinlein saying, "Your enemy doesn't view himself as the bad guy." The rabbits are doing what they're doing for what they consider to be acceptable reasons.

AH: *Of the several conflicts in the storyline: personal freedom vs. planetary safety, expansionism vs. colonization, military security vs. the rights of the media, paranoia vs. justified suspicion—which is your main theme?*

GALLACCI: Given the various threats from without or from within, as soon as you start compromising various, say, constitutional ideals in favor of "the threat of the moment," then you start making concessions against an ideal position or policy. That leaves the door open for all sorts of new unpleasant things to creep in behind them. For example: here in the US, challenges to various Constitutional assumptions of freedom and personal liberty have started—okay, it's like "the evil Commies are threatening us and therefore we have to take a firmer stance on the Press or on any of the previously given-for-granted freedoms."

> **"Ideals shouldn't be compromised due to the threat of the moment."**

AH: *Like the '50s internal paranoia.*

GALLACCI: Yeah, because it could in theory have been pretty easy to go from an anti-Commie paranoia to taking it a few steps further—hell, it's what Hitler did in Germany. He provided a threat and intensely polarized everyone with his "we've got to temporarily compromise for the good of the many." As soon as their rights were compromised they were never reestablished. They became in fact more authoritarian and lost the show.

AH: *With an eternal "state of emergency."*

GALLACCI: Real or imagined. I guess basically it's that ideals shouldn't be compromised due to the threat of the moment.

AH: *"All the hundred-odd species," you say, "effectively woke up one morning to be aware that they had a planet-wide technic civilization on their hands." That's a fascinating concept in itself, but dangerously close to a copout.*

GALLACCI: Uh. . .yeah.

AH: *What, if anything, will your characters be doing to explore the "origin of the species"?*

GALLACCI: They already have. They're trying to figure out hows and whys and so far they only thing they've found out is that they all seem to have been—manufactured. They have unusual similarities in their genetic structures, beyond the fact that they're all apparently mammals; there's also a few birds and such. It seems like someone has taken various blocks of home-made genetic structures and imposed them onto everybody. They have figured out that they were created, with their tech base. There's no archeological evidence of their existing beyond a few years before everyone started paying attention to the fact that, "Hey. We're here and we're doing things, aren't we?"

AH: *Then there was a period where no one thought of what had gone before?*

GALLACCI: Whether that was an imposed condition, or whether it was simply that they hadn't paid attention, nobody knows. It's kind of vague and ambiguous, but after a fashion it's what happened. It was a created situation, and there's been some astronomical scrutiny done trying to find out where they came from, but there's been nothing as yet to indicate any source. They're not native to the planet, they can't find anything in common with them on any of the planets they've explored as yet, and they've done about a hundred light-year radius worth of exploration so far.

AH: *Are there nonsentient versions of these animals and birds around?*

GALLACCI: No. They might land on a planet and find native fauna, but it'll be something completely alien, often a dramatically different biochemistry. They have found alien worlds with life, but nothing that is even terribly analogous to themselves.

AH: *Nothing sentient found yet?*

GALLACCI: Oh no. Nothing at all. In fact most of the planets are very young, it's a whole galactic substructure where the planets have relatively similar ages. Most of them are either pre-biotic or just beginning to establish biospheres.

AH: *Had you seen any Japanese animation before putting "Erma Felna" out? The in-jokish naming of "Captain Laputa" is only one of many fond references to their animation.*

GALLACCI: A little bit. About the only thing I had really seen that—I can't say it influenced me, but definitely seen, was *Space Cruiser Yamato* and, years and years and years ago, I'd seen *Gigantor* and *Astro Boy* and *Speed Racer.*

AH: *It's interesting hearing what people grew up with. I think almost everybody watched* Speed Racer. *I grew up with him and with* Kimba.

GALLACCI: I never saw *Kimba.* In *fact I never have, except for little snippets at conventions, seen any Kimba* episodes. I remember seeing the occasional *Astro Boy* and lots of *Gigantor.*

AH: *I remember the giant robot on the back cover of* Albedo *#0, and I think everybody keeps expecting to see giant robots.*

GALLACCI: The main reason I don't have giant robots in the stories that I actually write—there's giant robots in *Fusion* but I don't write *Fusion*—is that in real military terms, the problem is: the way most technologies work is a sort of "if you see it, you can hit it, and if you can hit it, you can kill it with a single shot." Giant robots tend to stand up a lot; they're easy to see and easy to hit, so my thought is that giant robots are amazingly too vulnerable for realistic combat.

AH: *According to the text piece in* Albedo *#0, Erma is a very good pilot, tactician, and strategist, as well as being a weapons expert. What doesn't she do well?*

GALLACCI: She's... She's not... She's a rather. . . .sort of an average kind of bland person on the street. The fans like her but in her context she's only average looking. She's one of these individuals who's dedicated herself to being very good in her military role, but she doesn't have much else to recommend her. She's relatively literate, and could write readable copy—

AH: *Her letters read like military extracts (an almost-quote from the comic).*

GALLACCI: Right! Even within her profession, she's not, as some fan-fiction would describe, a "Mary-Sue Sevenstars." You know, the-youngest-brightest-strongest-bravest-most-attractive-creature-on-the-planet type of thing. She's pretty good, but she isn't the best.

AH: *She'd have trouble functioning in a civilian context.*

GALLACCI: Well, she'd have to start over and retrain from scratch. She could probably be an adequate administrator, a paper-pusher, if she had to. She wouldn't like it, but she could function at it. She basically lives for her profession.

AH: *You've experienced the editing end of things from both ends now. Which do you prefer: editing others or being edited?*

GALLACCI: I don't mind being edited. In my experience with Fantagraphics, I've had no problem. Kim Thompson calls me up in the middle of the night complaining about something and usually it's a very intelligent complaint, and I nod sagely and say, "Yeah, you're right. Hit me again." You don't argue with the truth, especially when it's dumb things like poor structure or typos.

I'm not a very good editor myself, so I often feel a little awkward editing others, partially because I realize that if I were in their position I would want to be doing it my way versus having some editor tell me what to do. Some of my suggestions are not so much detail editing, but saying, "Gee, wouldn't you want to completely restructure the story this way so you can make it more dramatic?"

AH: *(Laughs) ". . .and so you can redraw the whole the whole thing from the beginning?"*

GALLACCI: Not quite, but almost. On the other hand, if someone pointed out to me that something of mine was seriously flawed, I'd say, "God, you're right. I guess I'd do better redo it." In fact, after seeing Taral Wayne's comments in the latest *Rowrbrazzle* I've had to reassess where the Erma story is going in general. I've had to back up. He hit it on the nose as to the war and all the silly things. . .

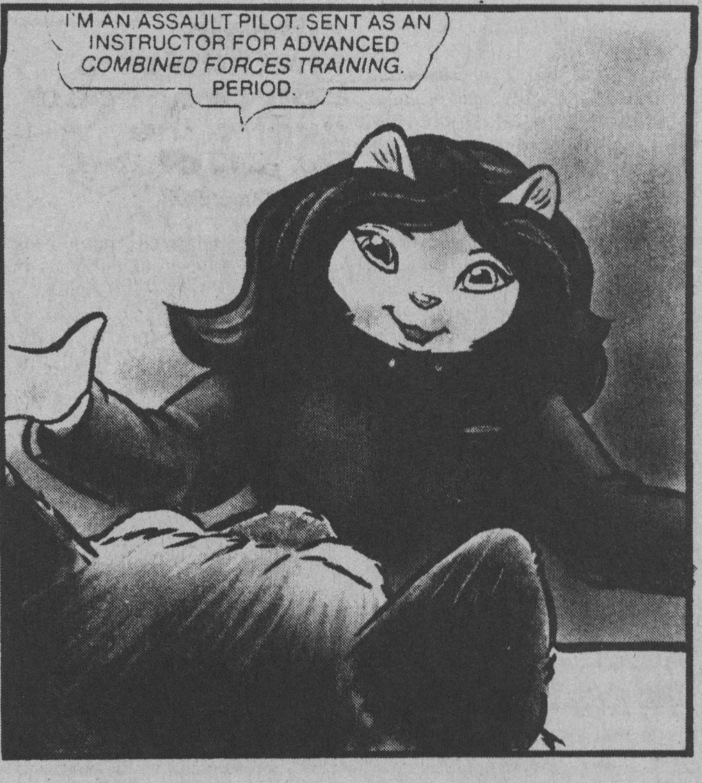
AH: *You were trying for too large a scale?*

GALLACCI: No, I was just sorta losing my focus. He said it succinctly, so I said, "Oh, yeah, you're right." I called him up and spent 50 minutes long distance to Canada. The writing will sharpen up.

AH: *How has your editing style changed since* Albedo *#0?*

GALLACCI: I have a better feel as

Early Erma Felna, again from *Albedo* #2.

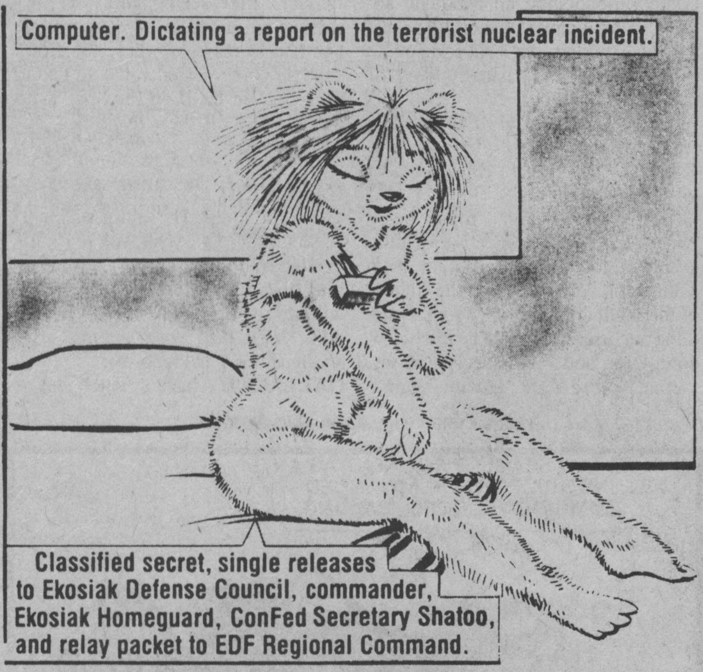

I'M AN ASSAULT PILOT. SENT AS AN INSTRUCTOR FOR ADVANCED *COMBINED FORCES TRAINING.* PERIOD.

an editor and on what makes a good story.

AH: *Dramatic structure?*

GALLACCI: Even more basic than that. When I started out, I didn't know much about how to write a story, how to express myself, how to connect with the audience correctly, so obviously I didn't know what to edit *for.* As I've been able to, as a creator—and as a consumer, for that matter—figure out what people like and don't like, I've been able to adjust the editing, because in the end you're trying to come up with a product that everybody and their brother will like and still maintain your artistic integrity.

AH: *Except for several stories in your first three issues, you've printed no outright humor strips. What prompted this move away from the traditional realm of funny animals in comics and back to their historical use as socio-political fables?*


Computer. Dictating a report on the terrorist nuclear incident.
Classified secret, single releases to Ekosiak Defense Council, commander, Ekosiak Homeguard, ConFed Secretary Shatoo, and relay packet to EDF Regional Command.

Mild (and extremely furry) titillation from *Albedo #5.*

GALLACCI: Lack of submissions. I have gotten some submissions from some fans who say (*nasally*) "Oh, I've got this wonderful story!" but most of them have been pretty weak, actually. I'd like to get some work from Marc Schirmeister. I think his stuff is . . "way cool"—

AH: *Had to work that cliche in . . .*

GALLACCI: Oh, yeah, I can't resist. I've got nothing that's been a good humorous strip.

AH: *Everyone's been biased perhaps by what they've seen so far in* Albedo.

GALLACCI: Well, I have gotten humorous material in, but it simply hasn't been very good. Very amateur —very well-meaning, but unpublishable.

AH: *I've not seen an "adults only" label yet on anything that's had your work in it. Is it a conscious decision of yours to draw and publish only "G" or "PG" material, or just a fluke? Have you had any flak so far on the amount of nudity and violence in* Albedo*?*

GALLACCI: I haven't gotten a lot of reaction, but I haven't gotten much into it yet. Mainly I think you can make a really good story with themes that in other publications would include scenes of graphic sex and/or violence, and you can get the message across without actually saying, "Oh, look at the tits!" Various characters will have relationships, various characters will get into amazingly violent and unpleasant situations, but there are ways to do it that—

AH: *You've had a shower scene, you've had a scene where a guy got cut in half by a kinetic weapon.*

GALLACCI: Yeah, but it isn't necessary to linger lovingly over a scene of mayhem. Some people are going to get upset, and I feel I can tell a story without having to show every little fussy bit.

AH: *You did, in a way, "discover" Stan Sakai and pave the way for* Critters. *How'd you meet him?*

GALLACCI: I'm not sure. Someone down in Southern California mentioned that Stan had this stuff he was sort of dinking around with. I didn't know Stan yet, so I got in touch with him and it just sort of happened. People who knew people who knew people got the word back and forth.

AH: *I know how big a fan you are of "WRAB Pirate Television"—you've been pushing them at conventions—and of Matt Howarth. Who first came up with the idea of spinning off "High Orbit"?*

GALLACCI: Deal Whitley and Matt have known each other for apparently a long time. Deal had been kicking around the idea for his story, and someone suggested, "Hey, why don't we have it correspond with Matt's mention of the 'High Orbit' scenario in the WRAB program listing?" So the tie-up was made, and since Matt and Deal knew each other, they could easily coordinate it.

AH: *Knowing Deal Whitley's affinity for otters, may I assume that "Dael Valderzha," the plucky otter in the EDF stories, did for him what he's been doing for some other comic artists?*

GALLACCI: Oh, well yes. The otter in the Erma stories—that's Deal. I finally met Deal at San Diego Con—what, three years ago?—a good while ago, and we sketched furiously. We traded sketches and had a wild time, and then I said, "Why not?" and I tossed the character in intentionally trying to make him like Deal. Deal really likes the Erma character, so I have his character like her as well. He's real silly; it's fun.

AH: *Is that where he picked up the idea of drawing various comic artists into "High Orbit"?*

GALLACCI: I don't know. I think he would probably have done it anyway.

AH: *I understand Monika Livingston will be working with Deal. What was the procedure when you two worked together?*

GALLACCI: I'd seen her artwork at a couple of conventions, and finally saw her at Orycon last year (1986), and said, "Hey Monika, you're a pretty good inker. How'd you like to help me with *Albedo*?" She said, "Gosh! Sure, why not." I'll do the initial pencils and she'll go back through and ink some of the characters and such. I'll finish off the inks, and do the tonework.

As far as Deal is concerned, because of his bad eyesight he has a real rough time inking his own work, so he's been farming out the inking. I inked the first installment of "High Orbit" and Steve Montano inked one of the others, but Montano hasn't been available, and I didn't think I did a very good job, so I said, "Hey, Monika, you like to ink, and your style is very similar to his, so . . ." At this year's San Diego Con she and Deal got together and talked it over long and loud, so I guess she'll be inking "High Orbit" as well.

AH: *I've been asked by a local comic book store owner whether you plan to put out an* Albedo *poster any time soon.*

GALLACCI: One of these years. It's

a matter of when the work allows. As I get the time and a little money; when we came out with that poster last year, it didn't make a dime.

AH: *Has* Zell, Sworddancer *gone to comic book heaven, or will she pop up again in her own title or in* Albedo *some time?*

GALLACCI: Monika is interested in the character, and what will probably happen is that I'll be writing and designing the stories, and she'll be doing all the art. Probably within the month she'll be working on a revised second issue, which will probably go to press sometime this winter. *Zell* is not dead by a long shot. The script has been laying around for a good while now, and I'll do the revising on it.

AH: *How much has the black-and-white bust hurt you?*

GALLACCI: In terms of old business it was pretty bad. I've got about six thousand dollars in old debts, and about half of that I don't think I'll ever be paid for. Sunrise owes me about half of that, and as their position improves they insist that they'll eventually be able to pay me, but Glenwood and a few others have disappeared entirely. I don't expect to see anything from that. Since then my sales haven't fallen off seriously, and hopefully once the distributors and retailers revise their attitude in dealing with black-and-whites and the alternate press, my sales can't go anywhere but up.

"[ZELL, SWORDDANCER] is not dead by a long shot."

AH: *You think it's a short-term slump, and things will pick up?*

GALLACCI: Provided the people in the business—basically the wholesale and wholesale/retail types—try to get into the business of selling comic books rather than trying to do "clever" business, which is what burned them in the first place. You know, overbuying with speculative intentions on sight-unseen titles last year.

AH: *I think that they have grown up a little bit.*

GALLACCI: (*pause*) Nahh. A lot of them haven't. They're simply afraid now, either afraid or broke.

AH: *Have you got any other new titles in mind for Thoughts and Images, besides* Zell?

GALLACCI: Very, *very* tentatively there are plans for Monika and Deal spin off into just a "Monika and Deal" book. There're projects that she's working on, plus some that he's doing, like "High Orbit" and/or 'Opporknockitytoons," and Monika has a story she's working on called "Rufus." She wants to work on other things, which would leave *Albedo* being primarily just an Erma book.

AH: *And "Konny and Czu."*

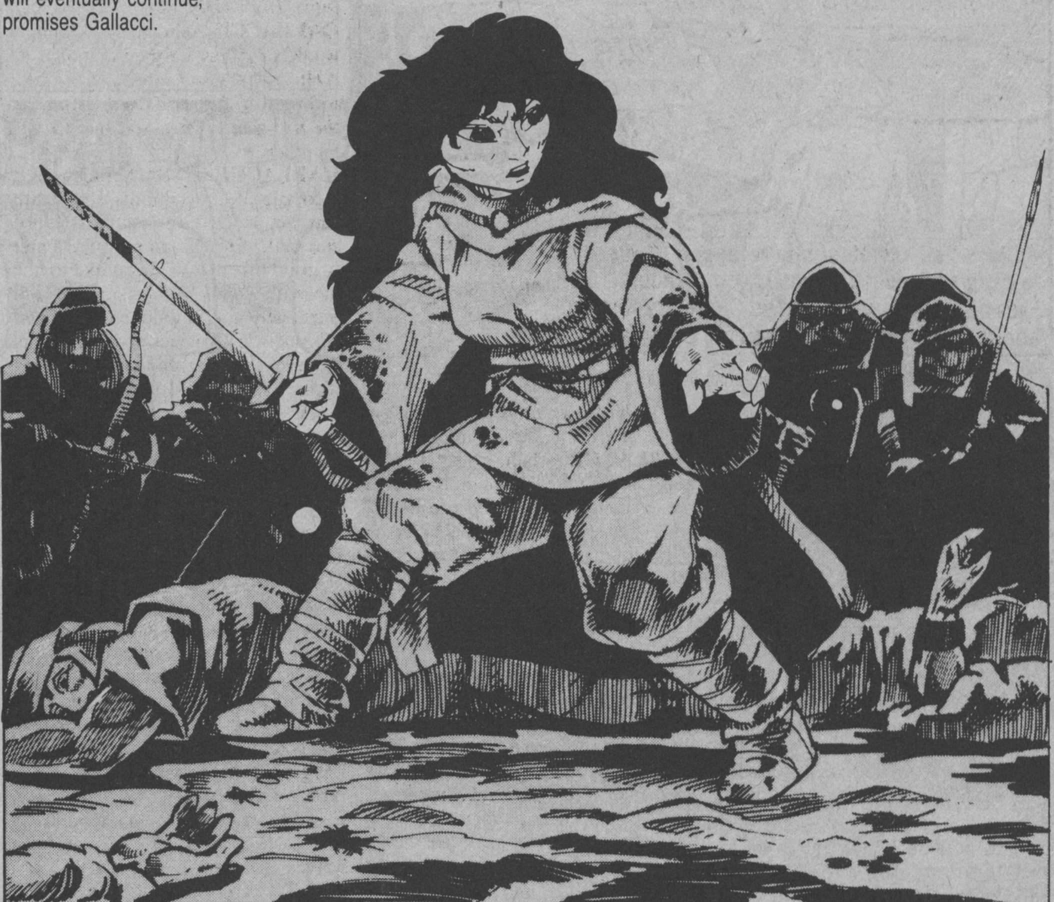
GALLACCI: Short back-ups. That remains to be seen. As far as anything else, I've gotten a couple of casual inquiries from people with products they'd like to see published, but they don't want to do it themselves.

Birthright

AH: *In the first issue of* Critters *Kim Thompson says "Birthright" was spun off of concepts premiered in* Albedo. *Is there any real connection between your storylines in "Erma Felna, EDF," "Zell" and "Birthright"?*

GALLACCI: The "Birthright" story is about a century after "Erma." It's a direct sequel. I won't tell you why

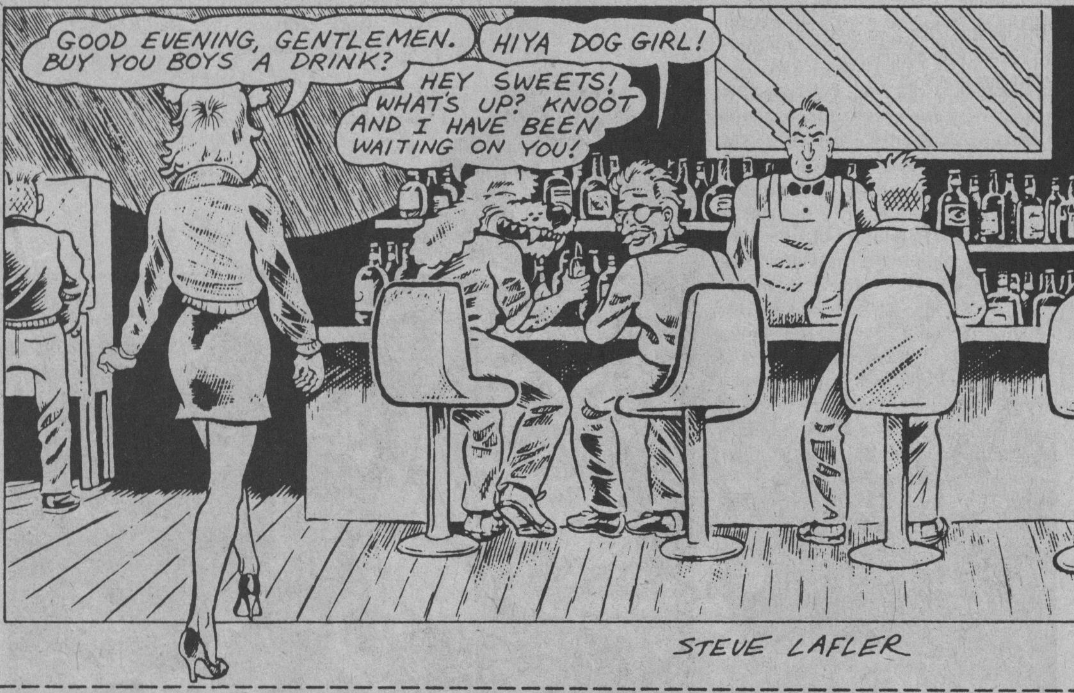
The ill-fated *Zell, Sworddancer* will eventually continue, promises Gallacci.



Modern Romance . . .

in

DOG BOY


GOOD EVENING, GENTLEMEN. BUY YOU BOYS A DRINK?
HIYA DOG GIRL!
HEY SWEETS! WHAT'S UP? KNOOT AND I HAVE BEEN WAITING ON YOU!
STEVE LAFLER

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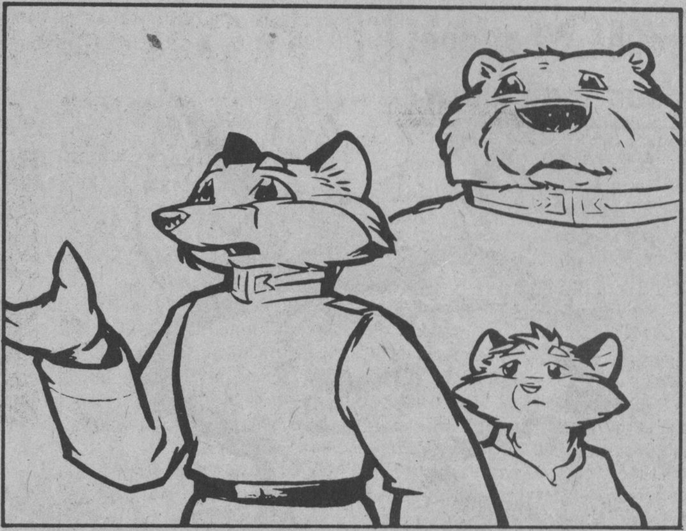


"Birthright" art before toning.

things are as they are in "Birthright," because that'll let on to too much of what'll happen to Erma in the story eventually. In fact, characters from "Erma," either them or their descendents, will show up in "Birthright" in the long term. Though the stuff is over in *Critters* for now, the story as a whole has barely gotten started.

Zell is completely separate from them. It basically ties in with your standard science fiction future history scenario, and *Zell* is part of that package of story ideas. If I do any science fiction stories, it would tie in with that universe.

AH: *Text stories?*

GALLACCI: I do have plans to write some science fiction, either illustrated or straight SF, literature. I do want to write some short stories and submit them to *Analog*.

AH: *You have a character say, near the conclusion of "Birthright II," that the matter conversion process about to be used could cause an energy release "almost like a supernova," that could "kill all inhabited space." Isn't that overestimating the danger of what is ultimately a local phenomenon, or is the character speaking for effect? Is the "Birthright" world in the middle of a cluster of stars?*

GALLACCI: I may not have stated it very well in the story, but the main idea was that this matter-to-energy conversion system changed matter to energy, not stopping at "go" and not collecting two hundred dollars. The problem was that if it gets loose, not only will it convert all of the matter within the system itself, it'll establish an ongoing effect that will consume all of the matter it can get hold of, i.e., the whole planet. If you very quickly turn a whole planet's matter into energy, the yield figures are disgustingly high. I don't know if it's at supernova level, because I haven't worked it out, but it's a pretty mind-bogglingly large pulse of energy. Even a small nova would kill at least a few local star systems.

AH: *Is this related to the warp effect they use in the "Erma" series?*

GALLACCI: No, it's merely a power supply for it.

AH: *Prince Alfon is shaping up to be a fine leader. Strangely, the ending of "Birthright II" seems to preclude his ever regaining his. . .birthright. Were you really planning from the first to exile the royal family?*

GALLACCI: Well, actually my original plan was to kill them all off. Back in 1983 when I first started it, I was thinking in immediate terms that included only "Birthright I." That's a simple story in itself, and I hadn't considered beyond that, except in very vague terms.

AH: *At the end of "Birthright I" they've achieved their first big victory, and the reader can assume that things go on similarly.*

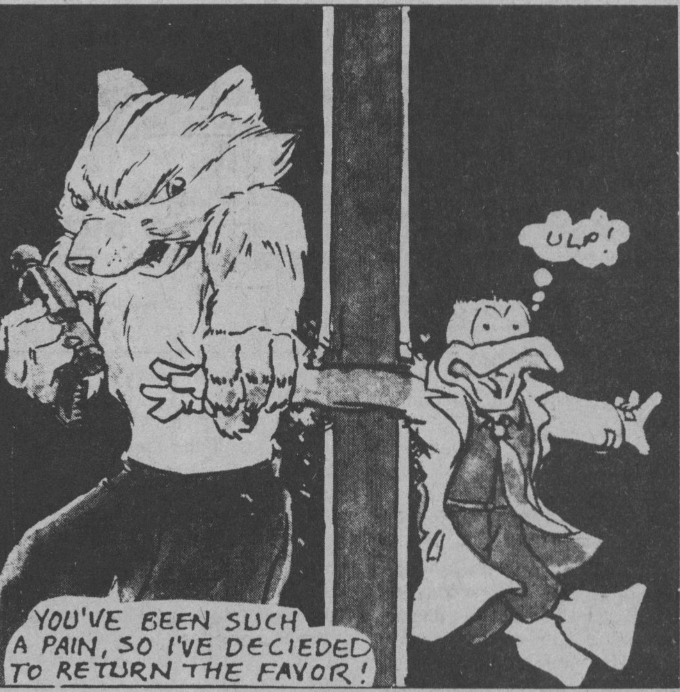
GALLACCI: You could end it there, like in a movie, and say, "they lived happily ever after. . . .maybe." The problem is that no one lives happily ever after.

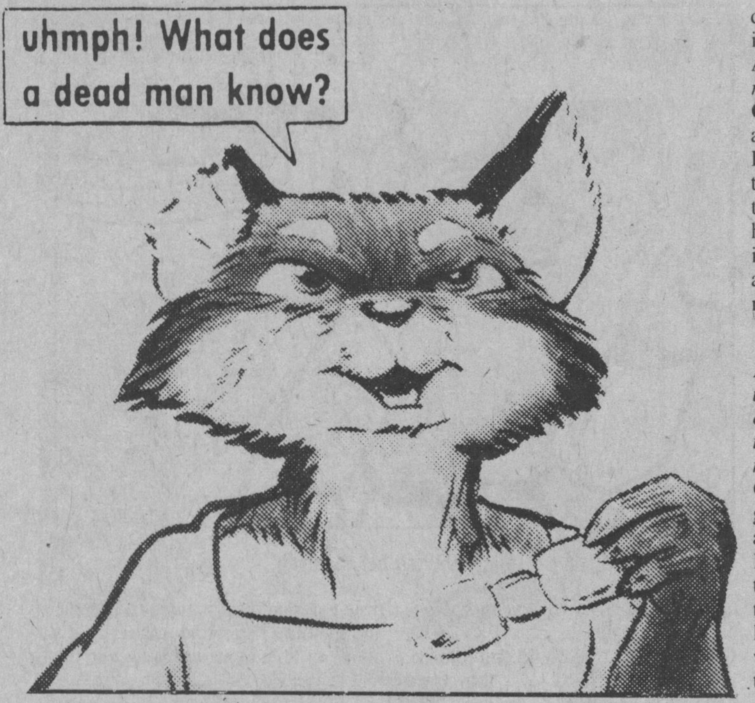
AH: *I have to admit that I've fallen love with Jenna Shodi. Do you have a favorite character from "Birthright"?*

GALLACCI: From "Birthright"? (*pause*) I kinda like Jenna, yeah. I've never spent as much time on that story as I did on "Erma." It was—what, almost five or eight years between the time I started thinking about "Erma" and the time I started doing it. That's plenty of time to get involved with the whole thing.

The "Birthright" story I originally started to write as part of the *Albedo* prototype book. Then, when it was clear I couldn't get it finished in time I went with the "Bad Rubber" story. I just shelved "Birthright" until Kim Thompson said, "Hey, do you want to do something for *Critters*?" and I pulled it back out and reworked it. It had a simplistic plot, so I complicated it a bit more and improved the art a lot.

Shades of *Blade Runner*! More from *Albedo* #0.


ULP!
YOU'VE BEEN SUCH A PAIN, SO I'VE DECIEDED TO RETURN THE FAVOR!


uhmph! What does a dead man know?

One of the "old farts" from "Birthright," now deceased.

So I didn't spend much time on it. I kind of like Jenna. I also like Prince what's-his-face—

AH: *Alfon, or—*

GALLACCI: It's Anton, Alfon, and Andre, so I have to go back through it to find out which one it is (*laughs*). I like all of them, actually. Killing off the old couple wasn't done lightly—well, it was and it wasn't—because I liked the old farts.

AH: *I thought they'd gotten away.*

GALLACCI: No. The old couple was on the one ship that exploded in the hangar.

AH: *Is there any word yet on a collected "Birthright"?*

GALLACCI: Kim Thompson has talked about it. In fact, when I was still working on part two, the question came up: what would the future hold? and the idea of doing the collection seemed to be no problem. It would depend largely on the fact of whether we could actually sell it, of course. *Critters'* sales have stabilized now at being pretty mediocre. I think Fantagraphics might be hesitant even to try in that they might not even get minimum sales.

AH: *I find it hard to believe that something with* Critters' *quality wouldn't have higher sales.*

GALLACCI: I think its problem is that it's an anthology book. I've heard the complaint many times. You don't know from issue to issue what you're getting, and some people might feel put out. They might get an issue with only one short story they like and the rest they would find unappealing.

AH: *There might be, for instance, someone who's only a Reed Waller fan, who'd only pick it up when it had a story like "Speakingstone."*

GALLACCI: Or there might be people who wouldn't buy it specifically because they didn't like "Lionheart" or "Gnuff." I like "Gnuff," but I think anthologizing it was a mistake. They should collect it in big, thick books. The way Milton writes his stories, they work better if you read 30 or 50 pages at once.

> **"Killing off the old couple wasn't done lightly, because I liked the old farts."**

AH: *It's good that you print a synopsis at the beginning of each chapter of your stories. Are you afraid of losing many readers with your long, involved plots?*

GALLACCI: That's a hard call, in that a lot of the fans really like it and are willing to stick with it even through the long delays. I'm really hoping to get *Albedo* out on a more routine schedule, which will sort of make up for it being so complicated. If they can get the issues quicker then they can follow the stories that much easier.

It's. . . I don't know, it's been going pretty good so far, so I'll keep on doing it more or less as I've been doing it.

AH: *What's in the cards for "Birthright III"?*

GALLACCI: If and when it does appear at all, it'll—(*short laugh*) Well, Fantagraphics hasn't shown any particular interest in doing it at a certain time. If we do it at all, it'll follow what happens to everybody who went off in space with the ship. That's about all I can really say now, without revealing material relating to "Erma."

Art

AH: *You've practically pioneered the use of airbrush in "overground" comics. How does its use differ from the usual penciler and inker arrangement?*

GALLACCI: Well, there're a few guys who've been using airbrush all along. Corben. Guy name of Peter Hsu has been doing tone work. I don't think it's been that much of a breakthrough. I like pure black-and-white line work, it's just that I don't do it well. To get the tones I like to have to resort to using the airbrush.

I'm not a very good inker, but I'm a pretty good painter.

AH: *If you were to do the book in color, would you be doing paintings, or airbrushing it, or coloring it the traditional way?*

GALLACCI: Actually, it'd be a lot like some of Moebius's work, line work with sort of a watercolor-y wash effect. Rinses of color instead of strong paintings. I really like his what appears to be watercolor washes over light line work.

AH: *What process do you go through in redesigning a natural animal into a cartoon animal?*

GALLACCI: I sort of build a generic funny animal form and incorporate the details of an animal, like ears, nose, the shape of the face, whether it's a long or short build, and like that. Nothing fancy.

AH: *You never go from the other end, picking a particular animal and attempting to reformat it?*

GALLACCI: No, I always start with a generic form. With, say, a mouse character, I do make them much more mouselike. If it looks more believable to have it look like a guy in a fuzzy suit, that's fine, but if it needs to look more like an animal walking on its hind legs, then I'll do it that way.

AH: *Were you aware that most of your characters wear loose-fitting clothes? Is this a prophecy of future fashions, or an artistic idiosyncrasy?*

GALLACCI: Both. I like loose-fitting clothes, and they're easy to draw. I like *wearing* loose-fitting clothes (*tugs on shirt.*)

AH: *Your space battles are particularly realistic. What research did you do for them?*

GALLACCI: Not a lot, since there haven't been a lot of serious scholarly studies done on interplanetary space battles. Obviously I can't refer to them. It just boils down to Newtonian physics. Things going fast versus things going fast in the other direction, and taking it from there. It's just a matter of intellectualizing it out.

AH: *What are your artistic influences?*

GALLACCI: As far as actual style, that's kind of hard to say. I've seen a lot of material by a lot of other cartoonists, but not being much of a "fan" I only look at it to see how other cartoon artists have worked in the past. I say, "Oh, that's a nice approach," and go on. I've had some fine art training in the past, too.

One of the things that's helped me find my funny animal style is—I've seen a little bit of Vaughn Bode work, but I haven't really *borrowed* from it. this is a hard question. I guess if I had to lay the blame on anyone, it'd be Wendy Pini and the fan cartoonist Jerry Collins. Not that I've borrowed too much, it's just that at a critical point when I was trying to figure out how to ink, seeing some of [Collins's] work made me see the light. There were little nuances that made me say, "Yeah, I see that. I'll do something like that too."

AH: *I do remember seeing a Bambioid (a Collins character) in the background of one of the "Bad Rubber" panels.*

GALLACCI: Yeah. When I was just starting to ink with a brush, I had just gotten a copy of *Vootie* with some Collins stuff in it. That's what made me get a brush and try inking with it. He was sort of a stepping-off point.

Fusion

AH: *How did* Fusion *come about?*

GALLACCI: Lex Nakashima had some really neat ideas (*laughs*). He first approached me to design some characters. He was happy with what I did, and later asked me how I felt about working on a comics project. The negotiations went on for the better part of a year, coordinating with Lela as far as art-style details, then going over the first few story ideas with Steve Barnes. Then we. . . just did it.

AH: *Are you enjoying working with Lela Dowling, and with Steve Barnes? Is it easier working from someone else's writing than your own?*

GALLACCI: It's quicker. There's a little bit more rewrite involved. The script I get from Barnes usually has several scenes that have to be adjusted to better fit a comic book. I have to do a little editing as I go, trimming—or fudging around—about a page's worth of material per issue. I can rough out a whole issue from his script in just a few days, whereas when I write my own stories I have to plunge through every line of dialogue and every detail of scene.

Working with Lela is great, although I feel a bit outclassed. She is an excellent, excellent artist, and she does some nice design-stuff. Actually, on one level I'm doing a lot of the hackwork that she would be effectively having her time bogged down with. I'm doing the things she *could* do, but her time is more important. That's why I do the initial grunt-work: the initial layouts and the background stuff. I don't mind being second-banana on the project. I feel almost inadequate that I'm not doing a better job. . . for her, because it's really more of a showcase of her work.

AH: *How does Eclipse's editing policy differ from Fantagraphics'? Do you ever get much pre-publication feedback from either Lex Nakashima or Kim Thompson?*

GALLACCI: Not much, since Lex is a pretty easy-going guy. He sort of plays interference between us and Eclipse, since they have editorial comments which I never hear about. I did get a cover rejected. I did a cover for *Fusion* #5 that was rejected completely. Other than that I haven't gotten much beyond encouragements to get work in on time.

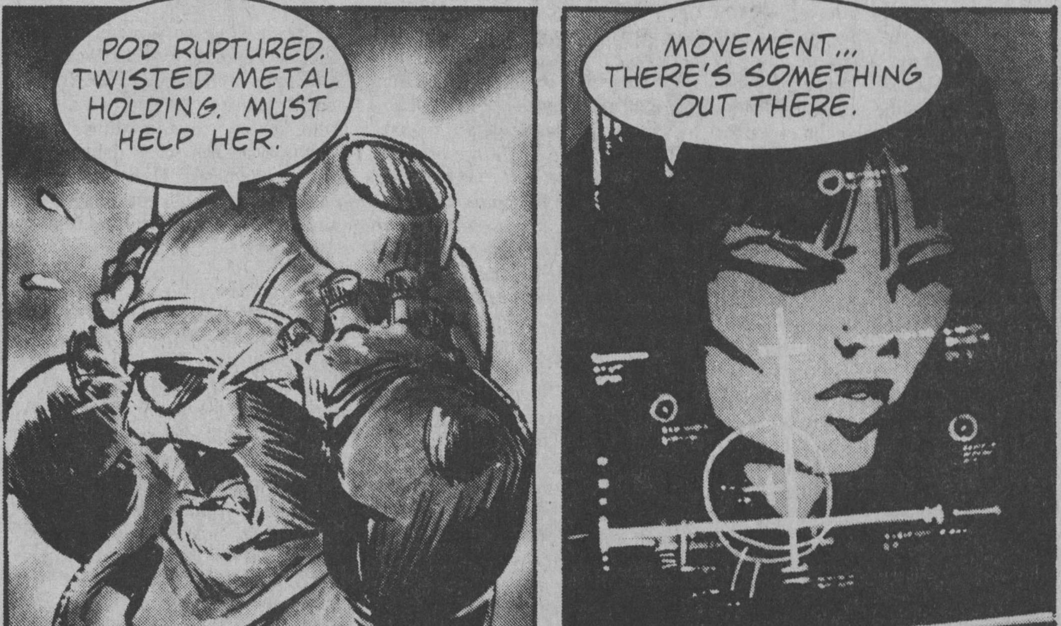
AH: *Rejected on what grounds?*

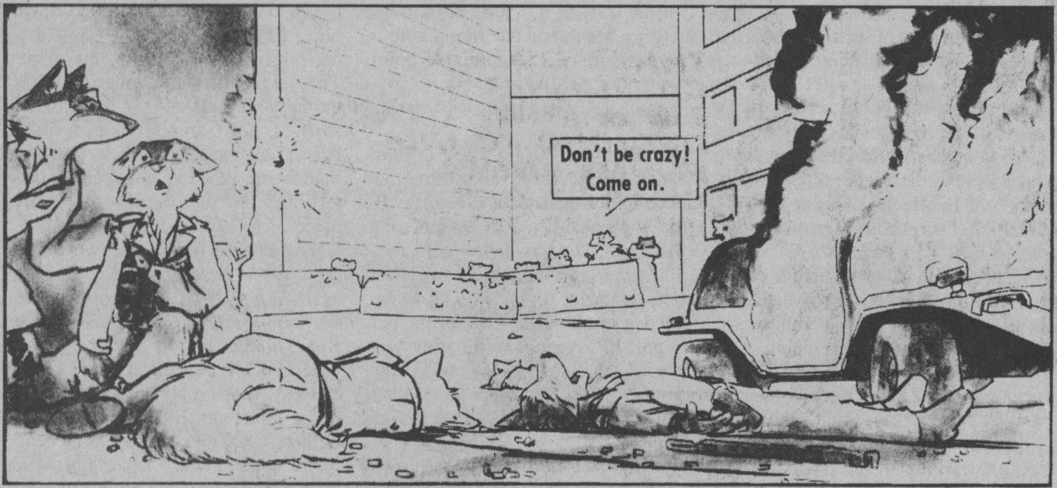
GALLACCI: Completely inappropriate. They thought it was too dark, and didn't like the design, didn't like the contents. . . Lex wanted a particular kind of cover, and I did what he wanted, pretty much. It just completely didn't work. Basically his judgment, what he thought would make a snappy cover, was *off*, and I did it a little *off*. By the time Eclipse saw it they went, "Eeeuh. Pee-yoo," and rejected it.

Philosophy

AH: *What do you read for enjoyment?*

A *Fusion* of talents by Gallacci and Lela Dowling, working in tandem.


POD RUPTURED. TWISTED METAL HOLDING. MUST HELP HER.
MOVEMENT... THERE'S SOMETHING OUT THERE.


Don't be crazy! Come on.

Terrorism in "Birthright": is it ever justified?

I remember your recommending Daniel Pinkwater—who else would you suggest?

GALLACCI: I read everything Matt Howarth writes. I read some science fiction, but I don't usually have time to read very much. I take what spare time I can, and grab whatever's available. I read technical stuff; I read a lot of newspapers. Also the occasional scientific journal. Whatever I can lay my hands on.

AH: *In "Erma Felna" the bad guys use terrorist techniques, and in "Birthright" the same kind of tactics are used by the underground. Do you see sniping in residential districts, for instance, and the tactical use of nukes, a likely scenario for future warfare instead of full-scale assaults?*

GALLACCI: Especially in a situation like I mentioned before with the giant robots—if you can see it you can hit it and if you can hit it you can kill it. Traditional standing armies in the field are becoming more and more vulnerable. If you want to seize an enemy's population and if the enemy isn't willing to destroy themselves in order to save themselves, you can take advantage of that by insinuating an army into the population, essentially using the enemy population as hostage. That's about the only way to conduct things any more.

War in the field, especially between forces that do have access to a comprehensive set of sophisticated weapons, becomes just a killing fields. In the Iran/Iraq war the only reason the Iranians are gaining any ground is that the Iraqis don't have enough sophisticated weapons to annihilate the Iranian forces in the field wholesale. To get a little morbid: if the U.S. was directly combating Iranian forces the way they're deployed in the field it would be an evil, evil massacre.

AH: *It's self-evident that realistic weaponry and transportation make the stories more believable, and a major portion of your letters page is devoted to various aspects of technology. Do you think we're ready for space travel, or are we more likely to hit a cyclic downswing into a new Dark Ages?*

GALLACCI: That's a hard call. There are Dark Ages and then there are *Dark* Ages. In the West there are enormous populations supported by a high-tech base. Most of the U.S. East of the Mississippi couldn't survive for very long, because it's one huge service industry with enormous population centers, without either a very large or a very sophisticated support base. Losing that base would basically kill a lot of people, or severly displace them. So I would hope against a "Dark" Age.

The only reason that space travel isn't getting more exciting is that no one's willing to throw enough money into it. The *only* thing that is stopping space exploration, exploitation, what-have-you, is that it takes money that nobody wants to spend right now . . .except for the Soviets (*laughs*).

AH: *If you were in charge of America's space effort, and could get relatively sizeable appropriations pushed through, what course would you pursue? What's most important: reusability of components, space manufacturing, colonization, or pure research?*

GALLACCI: A little bit of everything. First of all, I would better use the money that is available.

AH: *Try not to spend five thousand dollars on a wrench.*

GALLACCI: That, yes. A recent issue of *Newsweek* has an interesting article on big, dumb boosters—i.e., a booster that will push several tons into orbit at a price of only a few dollars per pound as opposed to several thousand dollars a pound. The last umpty years of NASA has pushed not the best way to get stuff into orbit, but the most expensive way to get it into orbit. The Soviets, using simple, reliable, technically unglamorous hardware, can get objects into orbit for as little as a tenth of what, say, the Space Shuttle does, and does it with a considerable amount of reliability and safety. The U.S. could do the same, but has chosen not to do so because there is a lot of money to be made in all the contracts involved. You can build a big cheap booster, but that means someone's expensive project is going to be sidestepped.

AH: *You called Reagan the "beast of the Apocalypse" in* Rowrbrazzle *#4. Any second thoughts?*

GALLACCI: Well, perhaps it was a bit of an overstatement. I think he's doing many silly things. I can't help but wonder, especially given all his pronouncements in his first term of office—beating the Bible entirely too much—I can't help but wonder if they're thinking very seriously silly thoughts about major East/West confrontations in the Middle East coincidentally close to the end of a millennium. It's apocalyptic silliness.

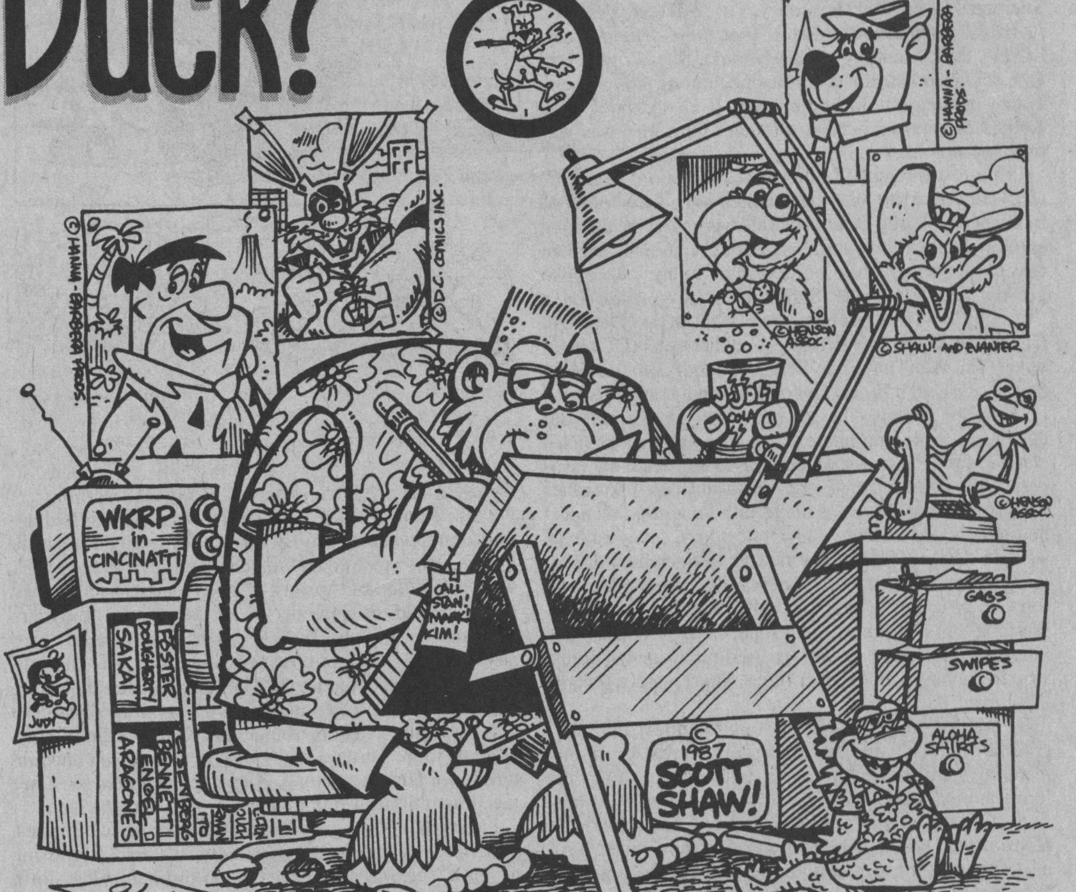
I think he has some dangerously grandiose fantasies. He and the mindset that comes with the Reagan administration is ultimately extremely dangerous. ●

EDD VICK, funny animal fiend and friend from way back, is a long-time member of Rowrbrazzle *(see following article). He's been inflicting his writing and art on all and sundry since 1980 in numerous science fiction and comics fanzines. His last appearance in* Amazing Heroes *#126, where he reviewed a passel of comics.*

He'll read most anything that's set before him, but gave up most Marvel and DC comics several years ago. They were rotting his brain, don'tcha know.

Why A Duck?

THREE DOZEN CARTOONISTS EXPLAIN WHY THEY DECIDED TO USE FUNNY-ANIMAL CHARACTERS IN THEIR WORK.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Scott Shaw!

[Scott Shaw! is probably best known for Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew, *but, as his resume here makes clear, has drawn many, many different funny-animals in his career.]*

Why *funny animals,* you ask?

For myself, the answer is multifold. First of all, I'm a lifelong animal lover. Over the years, I've had pets: dogs, cats, parakeets, a duck, a mynah bird, two chickens named "Fred and Barney," lizards, turtles, frogs, and a wooly-worm named "Roast Beef." I spent a lot of time at the zoo while growing up in San Diego. I was president of the San Diego Junior Zoological Society at 16; then, in college I worked there as "waste control technician," or trashman. (My dad was the zoo's chief of security, as well!) I contribute to more animal-funds than I can really afford. King Kong's my favorite actor, and the ending of *Fantasia*'s "Rite of Spring" always makes me cry. You get the picture by now...

As a cartoonist, my stylistic influences are diverse, to say the least. Jack Kirby, Mort Walker, Gilbert Shelton, and Ed "Big Daddy" Roth are a few of the unlikely artistic bedfellows who've shown me the way to approach my own style of cartooning. But my *primary* inspiration has always been that of the first wave of limited-animation cartoons produced for television in the late 1950s and early 1960s. They spawned a population explosion of funny-animal characters in quality and amounts unseen since the 1930s, with not a smurf in sight.

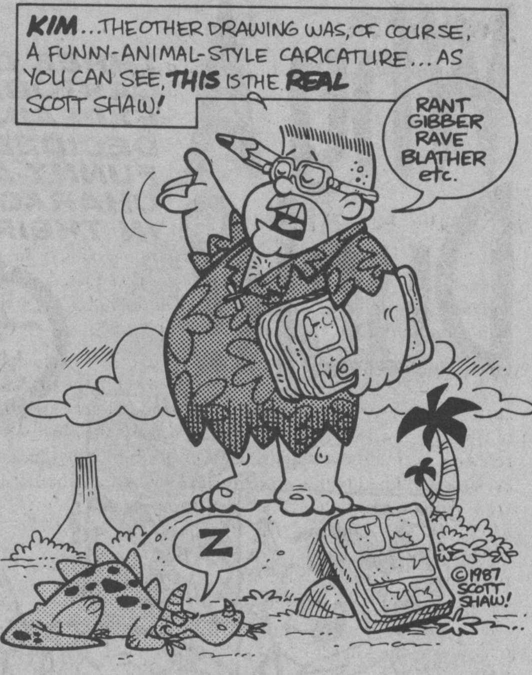
To paraphrase comedian Joel Hodgson, as a child I watched a *dangerous* amount of T.V. cartoons. Also, I was the perfect age (six in 1957) to fall under the influence of the crude but cleverly written and designed exploits of Crusader Rabbit, Ruff and Ready, Beany and Cecil, Rocky and Bullwinkle, Yogi Bear, Huckleberry Hound, Quick Draw McGraw, and others (such as non-animal classics: Tom Terrific, the Jetsons and—my personal favorites—The Flintstones.) Later, I identified and worked with many of these cartoons' designers, such as Ed Benedict, Dick Bickenback, Willie Ito, and the "Irrepressible" Jerry Eisenberg. I was also exposed to a full menu of theatrical cartoons, local stations' libraries of *uncut* Warner Bros., MGM, Fleischer and other clasic cartoons were commonplace in those programming-hungry times. *And* we had the original "Mickey Mouse Club"!

During this time, the comic book scene was on the comeback from the witchhunts of the early 1950s and funny-animal comics were a prevailing genre. Original and animation-derived characters and titles abounded. Here could be found the brilliant work of men like Carl Barks, Harvey Eisenberg (Jerry's dad), Paul Murry, Sheldon Mayer, Jack Bradbury, Owen Fitzgerald, Don "Arr" Christensen, Jim Davis [*not the Garfield artist. —ED.*], Jack Manning, Pete Alverado, Kay Wright, Phil DaLera, and Orlando (Bats) Busino, among *many* others. I was, as they say, in hog heaven. (I also clipped Walt Kelly's *Pogo* in its heyday, although the satire was way over my noggin.)

In time, I discovered other types of "more realistic" (*ha!*) comics. Mort Weisinger-edited *Superman* followed by early Lee-Kirby-Ditko Marvels were preferred among super-hero titles, but strangely enough, animal-oriented adventure series, while not exactly "funny," were also greatly attractive to me. Series featuring gorillas (DC's "Congorilla" in *Action*) and monkeys (DC's "Detective Chimp" in *Rex the Wonder Dog*) and dinosaurs (DC again, with "The War That Time Forgot" in *Star-Spangled War Stories* and Dell's *Turok, Son of Stone* and *Knoa, Monarch of Monster Isle*) would get my dime every time! But despite my widening interests, as a budding cartoonist I stuck to funny animals, attempting to duplicate my favorites of the three-fingers-and-a-tail variety (the Flintstones notwithstanding). Even as the trend swung toward super-hero-dominated cartoons and comic books, funny animals went in decline. Of the few new critters created during this period, standouts were Jay Ward's "Super Chicken" (on *George of the Jungle*) and Gilbert Shelton's "Wonder Warthog" in *Dragtoons*, both super-hero parodies. They influenced my less-than-well-received funny-animal comic strip in my high school paper (the campus mascot became "Coltman").

By college, my work was starting to appear in underground "comix," and again, a fair percentage of my material featured freaky fauna, but on the whole, the funny-animal was dormant, with Gold Key the last bastion of funny-animal publishing. Then Steve Gerber's *Howard the Duck* hit big, and my "Duckula" and "You-all Gibbon" (not to mention "Kosmo Kat," done with Mark Evanier and *that* Dave Stevens!) in Mike Friedrich's "ground-level" cousin to *Howard, Quack!* Finally, drawing funny animals was again acceptable, if not respectable!

When Marvel started publishing a line of Hanna-Barbera comics in the mid-1970s, editors Chase Craig and longtime fan-friend Mark Evanier gave me a chance to ink a few covers and back-up stories. These led to many more writing and pencilling assignments, which in turn led to a staff position in Hanna-Barbera's layout department. There, I worked on may of my favorite childhood *characters,* with many of my favorite childhood *cartoonists!* Since then, I've worked for most of the animation studios (in various creative capacities) on Bugs Bunny, the Muppet Babies, and many others. (I'm currently on the writing staff at Hanna-Barbera.) I still enjoy doing comic books, but more as a "professional hobby" than anything else. (Doing DC's *Captain Carrot and his Amazing Zoo Crew!* was lots of fun but a financial disaster compared to animation work.) My "Urban Gorilla" is the co-star (with Don Dougherty's "Blast") of the on-hiatus *Amusing Stories* from Renegade. I'm also doing strips for Stan Sakai's *Usagi Yojimbo* and *Critters;* special features for *Mighty Mouse, Underdog, The Mighty Heroes, Astro Boy* and *Jonny Quest* are also in the works. . . so I'm still trying to do my bit for the funny-animal tradition.


KIM...THE OTHER DRAWING WAS, OF COURSE, A FUNNY-ANIMAL-STYLE CARICATURE...AS YOU CAN SEE, THIS IS THE REAL SCOTT SHAW!
RANT GIBBER RAVE BLATHER etc.
Z
©1987 SCOTT SHAW!

I also enjoy drawing funny-animals as opposed to drawing funny *humans.* This is mainly for technical reasons . . .the artist in me finds it much more interesting to work with the incredible variety of body parts in all shapes, sizes and colors that occur in the animal kingdom. Humans *are* animals, but we've got a fairly finite diversity of types. Now, impose those qualities over the infinite possibilities of animals! They've got tusks and trunks and humps and hooves and wings and whiskers and pelts and paws and. . .again, you get the picture, I find funny-animals more *fun* to draw! (This concept I first encountered in a Sam Glanzman filler page in *Kona* #3. . .see the illustration on this page.)

I also enjoy playing with animal names, unusual species, puns, etc. in various combinations. It's also interesting to "cast" *against* type, such as an overachieving sloth, a neat pig, an aggressive lamb or a timid pit bull. Besides, what *other* type of comic book could ever feature such utterly unique creations as DC's 1940s characters "Jumping Juniper, the Down-Under Wonder" (a kangaroo) or "Nero Fox, the Jive-Jumpin' Emperor of Ancient Rome"?

That's why funny-animals!

Oops! I've got two final, quibblish comments on the subject, if you don't mind. . .

1) Contrary to Jim Shooter's testimony as reported in *The Comics Journal*, I've *never* "condemned the idea of anything but funny-animals in general." I've got a houseful of a zillion kinds of funnybooks that prove otherwise. Hell, I love all kinds of comics, including some embarrassingly awful ones (and *lots* of oddball "esoteric" comics!)

2) Many fans, writers, editors, publishers and other non-drawers seem to be under the mistaken impression that humor art (funny-animal or otherwise) is somehow *easier* to draw than "realistic" art. Not so, folks; many of our finest illustrators would be hard-pressed to draw Charlie Brown or Mickey Mouse, just as I would be ill-equipped to start drawing "The Rocketeer," love it though I may. In all fields of endeavor, the best stuff often looks the "easiest"!

I'll get off my soap box now. . .thanks!

John Pound

[The creator of Flip the Bird, John Pound is currently outraging parents around the nation with his renditions of the "Garbage Pail Kids."]

They're easier to draw.

Chuck Fiala

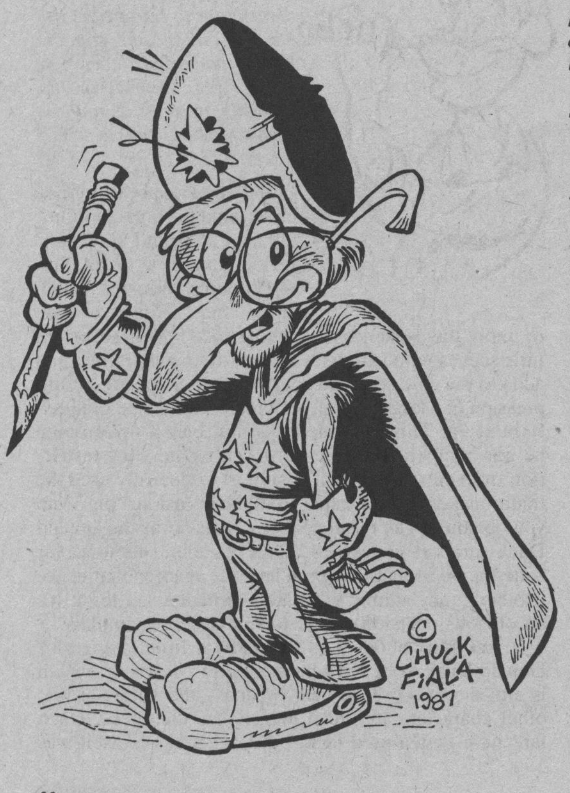
[The creator of Bullet Crow, *recently reprinted by Eclipse, Chuck Fiala also, along with compadre Jim Engel, put together the late, lamented "Fandom Confidential" series which appeared in* The Comic Reader.*]*

I have always enjoyed funny-animals. Like most everybody else, I first became familiar with them through theatrical cartoons released on television. I just couldn't get enough of Bugs Bunny. I sat there watching his original 1940-1948 releases over and over again. I never got bored by them, even though I had both the picture and soundtrack memorized. I also liked the Disney cartoons shown on *The Mickey Mouse Club* and *The Wonderful World of Color.*

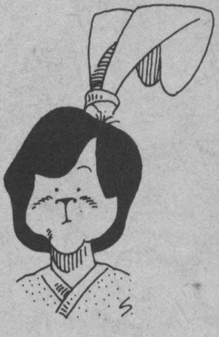
This eventually led to my reading of comic books. The first comic I ever saw was a *Comics and Stories*. For a brief period in my early teens, I lost some interest in the characters, thinking the super-heroes were the only cat's pajamas. But soon I found myself collecting Pogo paperbacks, Gold Key ducks, Krazy Kat reprints, and watching old Bugs Bunnys on TV. Some kids never grow up!

I also found that my art talents lie in the area of humor comics. I enjoy drawing crazy characters jumping about in mid-squash or mid-stretch, and screaming in anguish, "Oh agony, agony!" Their emotions read so well on the page.

Perhaps that's why funny-animal comics and animation style comics are among the most popular comic books printed in the world. Perhaps some day they'll even be effectively sold in comic book stores.



Stan Sakai



[Stan Sakai is the creator of Usagi Yojimbo and Nilson Groundthumper, as well as a top letterer.]

At first, all my characters (Usagi, and Nilson Groundthumper and Hermy) were human. I have an entire eight-page pre-funny animal Nilson story somewhere cluttering up my files. Of course, he wasn't called "Groundthumper" at the time. His name was Torin Oakenshield of something equally pretentious and Marvel-esque. Hermy was always Hermy but was a troll.

Usagi was just called "Miyamoto" and only existed as sketches. He was a secondary character in the Oakenshield storyline.

One day, I turned Miyamoto into a rabbit, tied his ears into a samurai topknot, and was delighted with the result. He wasn't the present-day Usagi—he had black ears and hair—but he looked visually unique and took on an entirely new personality. I named him "Usagi" (which wasn't a stroke of genius since it means "rabbit" in Japanese).

I immediately added long, floppy ears to Torin and gave him a new name. I changed Hermy to a . . . I have no idea. I've called him a mole, hamster, hedgehog and gerbil but his head looks almost like an odd-shaped potato with ears (maybe I'll create a new line of funny vegetables).

And so my present funny-animal characters were born—and you know what? I like them this way.

Jim Engel

[The creator of Dick Duck, Duck Dick, Jim Engel has also contributed to several DC Comics funny-animal comics (including Captain Carrot*); his most recent work was "Leggo Lamb" in* Critters. *He is also drawing covers for Spotlight Comics' revivals of* Heckle and Jeckle, Mighty Mouse, *and* Underdog.*]*

"Why a duck?" I've got to blame Bob Clampett, Chuck Jones, and Friz Freleng. *Everyone* at Warner Bros., Disney, Hanna-Barbera, Lantz, MGM, Terrytoons, and Jay Ward Studios! I gotta blame Walt Kelly! Harvey Eisenberg! Paul Murry! Carl Barks! Al Hubbard! Jack Bradbury! *All* the artists who made all the great Hollywood cartoons and (later) all the TV cartoons of my childhood. *All* the artists who drew the comic books and strips, coloring books, golden books and puzzles and anything *else* that featured all those colorful funny-animal characters!

I've drawn all my life, and been a professional cartoonist for 12 years, and my favorite thing to draw is funny-animals. It's also my favorite thing to see other cartoonists I like draw.

Don't get me wrong—I always have (and still do) loved and enjoyed *all* kinds of comics and cartooning. I went through the adolescent years of wanting nothing more than to work for Marvel (and stil have a folder of my own super-hero weirdness to prove it), but by the time I embarked on an artistic career I had come to realize that my skills were more as a "funny" cartoonist than a "serious" one.

I spent nine years illustrating and writing "studio cards" for a Chicago-based greeting card company (Mark I). There I learned the philosophy behind "neuter charac-

ters"—those androgynous, humanoid, frizzy-haired, patch-clothed "kooky" characters that've populated greeting cards for decades: you can't tell if they're male or female, so a man *or* woman can send them to a man *or* woman. Part two of this androgyny deal was that *animals* were even better than "neuters," since "everybody loves animals" and buyers view them as more sexless than "neuters." That was all I needed to hear. From that point on, I drew neuters of humnas only upon my art director's request, and proceeded to turn out hundreds of funny-animal greeting cards.

(Of course, there was an anthropomorphic fly in the ointment... Many species were off limits due to the potential offense card senders or receivers might take at being portrayed as pigs, hippos, rhinos...all the animals that made *another* Chicago card company, Recycled Paper Products, such a success.)

I have done a lot of work depicting humans, and I enjoy it fine, but if there were two basically identical jobs, and the only difference were that one featured humans, and the other animals, I would choose to do the animals, and would enjoy it *much* more. If Mort Walker croaked, and they begged me to take over *Beetle Bailey*, I'd find it difficult to face a future of drawing humans all day long. (Difficult, but I'd do it. Then I'd stage a war, kill all the guys at Camp Swampy, and make Otto the star.) If the charcters were *animals*, it'd make all the difference in the world to me.

Last year, I made my first attempt at getting syndicated, and did so with an all-animal cast. I did it knowing ahead of time that editors have an aversion to them. (I'm not talking about "thought balloon" types like Snoopy, Garfield, or Fred Basset, I'm talking about walking, talking animals with clothes that live in an all-animal world.)

I *had* to do it that way, because if it'd flown, I'd be faced with *doing* it. So it hadda be animals.

This preference extends somewhat to what I like to see or read by others. The only major Disney cartoon features I've never seen or been really excited to see are *Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella.* Why? Because they're basically about humans, and if it was a toss-up between seeing *Sleeping Beauty* for the *first* time or *Jungle Book* for the *tenth*, there'd be no contest. UPA is the least interesting of the Hollywood cartoon studios to me because they chose to do a million "Mr. Magoos" instead of a million "Fox & Crows."

Walt Kelly's *Pogo* is my all-time favorite strip, and Kelly my favorite cartoonist. If Pogo had been about people living in the swamp, I would never have become as enamored of it as I did. *Asterix* is another of the strips I love and respect most. If Goscinny and Uderzo did the *same* strip, but the characters were *animals*, I'd love it even *more* than I already do. It would obviously be a cosmetic change, but for some reason, I'd prefer it. (Ironically, I'd've preferred *Maus* with humans. Just kidding.)

I guess in the final evaluation, my enthusiasm for the form has a lot to do with the time I grew up in. I had access via TV and books (of all kinds) to the work of great funny-animal cartoonists whose names (and earlier works) I would discover as a teenager and adult.

What I consider the greatest funny-animal films and comics were produced before I was even born. I just had to soak it up and say "Me too!"

The friends I've had and have who are funny-animal cartoonists seem to feel pretty much the same way, and I've found a camaraderie among them. As third, fourth, or fifth generation anthropomorphizers, they actually *love* the genre. They do it by *choice,* and with none of this Carl Barks apology stuff ("I always thought of them as *people*...)...I personally find it disappointing that Carl Barks didn't unashamedly *prefer* drawing ducks, it was just something he had to do. (I've always felt the same way about Eisner saying he didn't want "The Spirit" to wear a mask and gloves. I simply wouldn't have the same enthusiasm for Will Eisner's "Denny Colt, Crime Fighter").

So, I dunno if the animators and comic guys who make up the Who's Who of my artistic heroes could honestly say they *preferred* working with funny-animal characters or just did it 'cause it was there, but the fact remains it was there, and they did it, and they've inspired me to do it too.

Freddy Milton

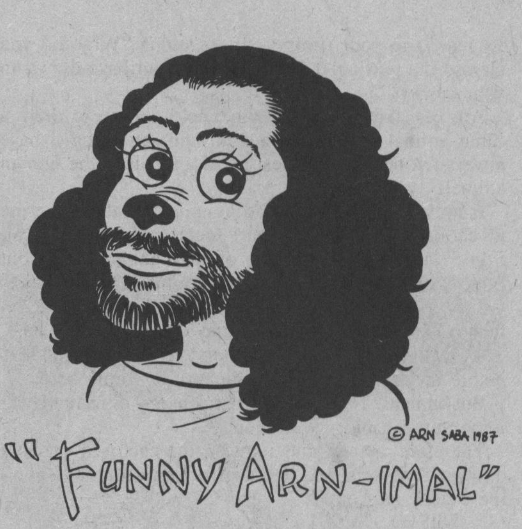
[Freddy Milton is the writer and artist of Critters' *"Gnuff" series, as well as a prolific contributor to European Disney and Walter Lantz comics. Rather than asking him for an essay, we're reprinting the following musings on anthropomorphics from a 1978 interview.]*

I think the Dutch cartoonists understand the point of funny animals. [Marten] Toonder's series contain a lot of different funny-animals, and I enjoy that. Since I like to imply the existence of a whole society, I need lots of little scenes with various walk-ons. It creates variety and adds to the epic scale. Readers need to be given the impression of a larger universe, which can then be gradually built up. This is what Barks did, but in my opinion he was hampered by an unfortunate laziness (or restriction from outside!) in that he almost exclusively used the traditional dog types, aside from the occasional pig. And you obviously can't change that now as far as the Donald Duck series is concerned, since it's found its form for better or worse, but when you have the chance to influence another funny-animal universe significantly, I think it's an obvious decision to use lots of different animals.

If you think about it, it's actually a little strange for Donald Duck to be walking around in *Duck*burg, which is almost entirely inhabited by dogs, and where all the other characters are much bigger than the ducks. Duck fans have gotten used to it, but Carl Barks himself was well aware that he'd created a problem for himself—but as I said, it may have been indirect pressure. If he *had* brought in any different funny-animals, they would have drawn some of the reader's attention away from the eternal ducks, who, in the American tradition, have to be the stars of every story. The dog figures were so neutral, so anonymous, that they didn't draw any attention. You just registered their presence, and then you looked at the ducks. It's this American mentality that the readers have to get used to perceiving certain characters as "stars," while the rest of the cast is insignificant. And Barks was well aware that this limited the the potential for telling different kinds of stories were limited. This is the point where I want to try to move it in the direction of European comics, which don't revolve around this obsession with "stars" but emphasize the story instead.

Arn Saba

[Arn Saba is the creator of Neil the Horse.]



That is one of those intimate questions that one is never supposed to ask.

I have never asked myself before now, just why I do funny-animal comics. It is certainly not the only thing I have wanted to do in comics. In fact, although I experimented a bit as a child with animal cartoon characters, it was usually human characters that I did, until I was almost thirty. Sometimes trying to be funny, sometimes trying to be serious, but almost always using humans.

Carl Barks was my idol, but so was Caniff. For two years, at ages nine and ten, I fanatically produced a daily-and-Sunday adventure comic strip, modeled on *Terry and the Pirates.* As well, I had fallen early in life for the old great masters of the 'teens, Twenties and Thirties: Dirks, McManus, Willard, Opper, and many others of that rough and highly creative era. So even when I tried to emulate Barks's exotic adventure stories (which I did try, repeatedly), I used people. Or perhaps it was just because Barks made Donald seem so human. (At one point in my teenage years, I identified very strongly with Barks's Donald.)

In any case, to spare you the rest of my autobiography, when I started doing *Neil the Horse* in 1975, it was like suddenly finding my own voice. Actually, even then I had to tune up a bit at first, and I'm still nowhere near as tuned up as I'd like to be, but from that time on, I felt that I was doing the right kind of cartoons. Doing those characters seemed almost pre-ordained. I feel that Neil and Soapy were visited on me as much as I invented them. Sometimes I feel I am just their interpreter.

The struggles I went through to refine that interpretation included a lot of devoted emulation of the work of Floyd Gottfresdson. After a while I realized that I would never be Gottfredson. But that period helped me to discover what I should have known all along: that my greatest influence is the work of Walt Disney, and his studio. And of course they used animals, and so, ultimately, I suppose it was inevitable that I would try to do the same. (It seems I always end up trying to imitate *someone!*)

But what is it that makes cartoon animals worthwhile? Well, they're cleaner than real animals, for one thing. But besides that—(I remind you that I have never thought about this before)—I think that they are easier to make universal. Certainly that is *my* aim with cartoon characters, and I think their being animals aids me. They are less burdened by the specifity of their human lifetime. We don't ask ourselves detailed questions about the lives of funny-animal characters, as we do about humans. How old are they? Married or single? What social class? How educated? How wealthy? And so on. . .

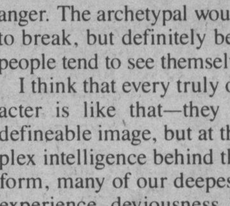
If we want cartoon characters to represent types, or, better, archetypes, then they are strongest when they are simplest, in character and in design. This simplicity is not the same as lack of depth (although it can be—look at *Boner's Ark* or that farm thing by Jim Davis). And there are characters who have complexity without the clarity of conception, which renders them unknowable, unrecognizable. I think, regretfully, of Freddy Milton's *Gnuff* characters.

As a shining example of expressive simplicity, let us take Walt Kelly's "Porkypine" character, in *Pogo.* Porky is supposedly a porcupine, but he looks more like a piece of firewood. His appearance is dominated by his huge, expressive features, most notably the eyes, which are often scowling. He has a rudimentary trunk and limbs for simple perambulation and gesture. Yet he is one of the most deeply poetic of funny-animal characters, sharing some territory, yea, even with the great Krazy him/herself. Porky is a creature of tenderness, irony, love, hurt, and some anger. The archetypal wounded, sensitive soul, too strong to break, but definitely bent. It is very much how many people tend to see themselves, although few would say so.

I think that every truly outstanding funny-animal character is like that—they present a definite, relatively defineable image, but at the same time, they have a complex intelligence behind them. They personify, in a pure form, many of our deepest-seated attributes: innocence, experience, deviousness, determination, loneliness. We can see them think, and feel them suffer, and it is all very keen and vivid because they are stripped-down, less compromised and less self-conscious versions of ourselves. They are good and bad, and lustful, and generous, in greater measure and more fully, than we will ever be, and they express thoughts and feelings and attitudes which we often repress. I believe that it is this which makes them loveable, and sympathetic.

So if you want an answer that takes all the fun out of it, there you go.

Sheldon Mayer



[Sheldon Mayer, who celebrated his 70th birthday this year, did the production work on Action Comics *#1, making him the midwife of the American comic book. Although his best-known comics are probably "Scribbly" and "Sugar and Spike," his fine work on "Three Mouseketeers," "Doodles Duck," and "The Dogo and the Frog" made him eminently eligible for this feature.]*

In answer to your (proposed) question: "Why did you choose the particular funny-animals you have drawn in your career?"

Answer: I have never deliberately chosen to draw a funny-animal rather than a funny human being. I have always felt that the funniest of all animals is the human animal.

However, I have often had assignments that gave me no choice. Funny-animals were specifically asked for. So I did 'em. At no time did any of these animals come out funny until they were endowed with human characteristics, foibles, and aims. Most animals are dignified and straightforward and not the least bit funny in their natural state. They need to be doctored and stood up on their hind legs before they're ready to get laughs in a comic book.

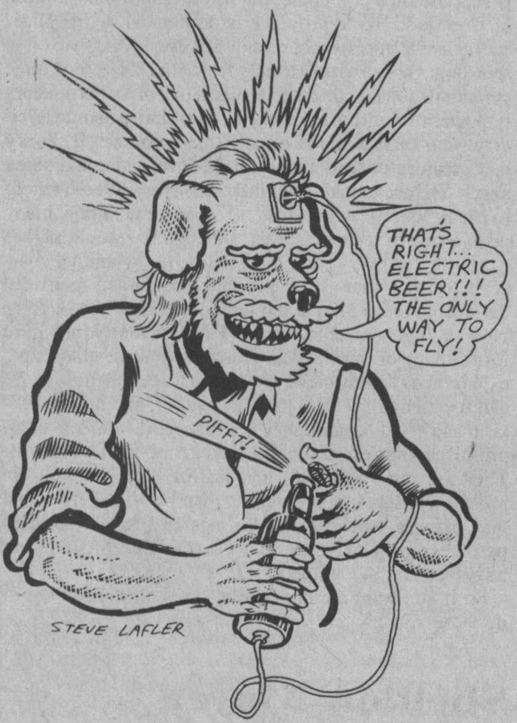
But humans? No trouble! To look at any of us (and examine our behavior) is to laugh!

Therefore, as per your request, the enclosed drawing of myself, disguised as my favorite funny-animal, shows me exactly as I am.

Steve Lafler

[Steve Lafler is the creator of Dog Boy.*]*

Just last night, I dreamt of walking through a lush, green idyllic wood. My serene bubble was burst when I noticed a couple of tigers sneaking around in the trees, looking for a meal. Yikes!


THAT'S RIGHT... ELECTRIC BEER!!! THE ONLY WAY TO FLY!
PIFFT!
STEVE LAFLER

I decided, via some very convoluted, very questionable logic, that if I pretended I had only three legs (instead of four) that these hungry carnivores would take pity on me. Surely they wouldn't eat me if I was handicapped? (The strangest thing here is that I started out with four legs rather than my usual two. . .) Anyway, I start beating a humble 3-legged retreat, stage left. The tigers smile mischievously, and in the true spirit of sportsmanship, they pursue me on three legs rather than four. I'm doomed for sure now, because I notice several additional tigers hobbling toward me on three legs from another direction. Fortunately, I woke up right around then!

Uh, what was the question? Oh, yeah. . .Why a duck? Would you settle for a dog instead? For that matter, why even use an animal as a cartoon character? I can only answer that question by peeking at my own past as a cartoonist, to see where the critters began to appear as characters in my own work.

During the '70s, I had a daily comic strip at UMASS Amherst, in the *Massachusetts Daily Collegian.* The strip was called "Aluminum Foil." Its star was Gerald, who always wore an Aluminum Foil hood over his head. On the surface, the foil hood was a tip of the hat to the whole tradition of cartoon heroes with secret identities. In actuality, the Aluminum Foil theme functioned as springboard into the bizarre. I figured , if a guy is nutty enough to wear a foil hat, then anything could happen. . .and it did! In the course of approximately 480 daily strips, Gerald mixed it up with many a non-human nemesis. . .but not too many of these were animals! The various and sundry supporting characters included the Cake Men, Benb, Major Carrot, the evil Pepper Men, Benb, the Glebes (from planet Pluto), Benb, the Bagel Men, Madame Squarehead, Mr. Banana, Darlene Skank, Mr. Cucumber, The Onion Men, Alfred Knoot (originally a robot pawn of the Cake Men), God, Benb, the Devil, and various other fruits and vegetables. Gerald's rallying cry in those days was "Ah Want Some Pie!", and non-sequiturs ruled the day (along with Benb, of course).

I wasn't really into animal type characters yet, but I had certainly established a precedent for dealing with non-human types. The fixation on food characters may have had something to do with the amount of dope your typical college cartoonist smoked in the '70s.

Upon graduating (Dec. '79) I reluctantly gave up my captive audience of 25,000 students and went into the real world of comics publishing. In the Spring of 1981, I released a book entitled *Mean Cat* (finally, an animal!) about a mean cat. This kitty was more a metaphysical trickster than a Garfield type, thank the lord. It seemed important to me that the character was both female and a cat. Mean Cat as character is both brutal and compassionate. She represents something of an archetype, smack between the nurturing mother, the femme fatale, and Mother Kali, the blood-thirsty Hindu death goddess. Mean Cat revels in tearing apart the old to prepare fertile ground for the genesis of the new. She stands for creativety winning out over ruin, destruction, even death, although she sometimes kills to achieve her ends.

After *Mean Cat,* I put out a couple of issues of *Guts.* It would be a compliment to call these "developmental" works.

By the end of '81, I had dropped Gerald the foil-head as a character, Mean Cat had temporarily served her purpose, and Benb would visit upon me when he saw fit, and stay away when he saw fit. I wasn't exactly kicking around for a new character, and this is when Dog Boy presented himself to me.

My writing technique is quite simple. . .quiet down my internal dialogue, see what's circulating around the edges of my psyche. Open up a channel, so to speak. We all gots lots of 'em. You could call it automatic writing, perhaps surrealism, or shooting from the hip. The gist of it is that spontaneity is the order of the day.

So I'm sitting around my studio in late '81, doodlin' on a napkin. At that point, I shared a cavernous (and miraculously cheap) studio in Eugene, Oregon, with various artists and sleaze-ball businessman. As I doodle, my sleaze-ball business buddies are hanging around, speculating on the delightful prospect of hiring a secretary for their shady marketing concern. Naturally, she would come replete with very long legs, a very short-skirt, and very, very high heels. I scribbled away as I overheard their locker room conversation, chuckling to myself. After a few minutes, I ended up with a drawing of this sleaze-ball business at his desk, eyeing his leggy secretary and breaking into a frenzied sweat. The businessman had a big ol' doggie head. I labelled the drawing "Dog Boy," and showed it to my politically incorrect pals. They laughed . . . I guess it was about four or five months later when I drew the first Dog Boy story, which I published in *Guts #3*. It started out as a one-pager, and I never really intended that it would become a 13-page story, let alone its own comic book.

So. . .why a duck? Because that duck has always been there for artists. Many diverse cultures have shamanistic traditions where the shaman has an animal helper, who aids him in his healing work. The shaman may do a dance imitating the animal, expressing that animal's spirit with his own body, hoping to attract the animal spirit to his own.

There's also the Greek myths (as well as other cultures' mythologies), liberally "peopled" with dozens of anthropomorphics. Hell, Zeus himself often took the form of various critters to achieve his ends. . .usually to get laid, or to dodge Hera, his wife.

It's only natural for many cartoonists to fool around with anthropomorphics characters. It's a tradition as old as cave drawings, I'd wager.

Tom Stazer

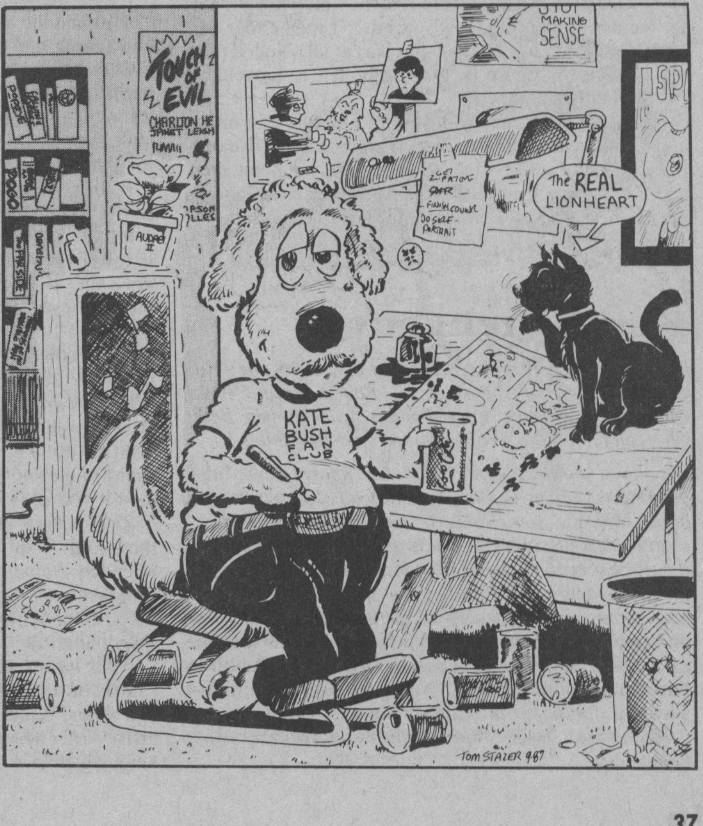
[Tom Stazer is the creator of Spaced *(currently published by Eclipse), and regularly draws the adventures of Lionheart for* Critters.*]*

Although I was weaned on Warner Brothers cartoons and Disney features, I never actually considered doing funny-animal work myself until I was exposed to Walt Kelly's *Pogo*—and shown that the furry critters could serve as vehicles for the parody and satire I tend to write.

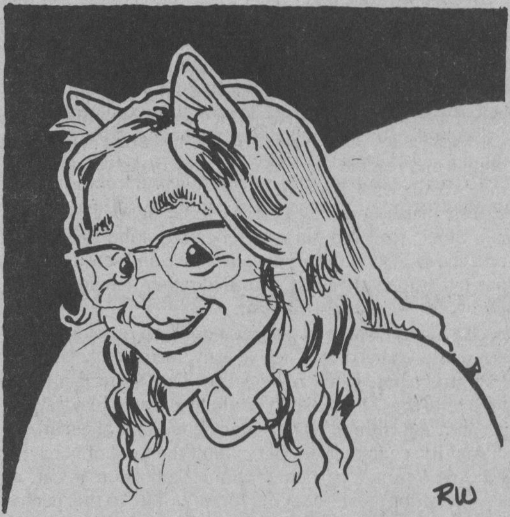
Since I've begun "Lionheart" (my first full-blown funny-animal series) my appreciation of the field has really grown; nowadays I'm much more partial to drawing animals than humans. I find that working in a "cartoon reality" allows me much more freedom in terms of facial expressions, body language and physical movement. It really emphasizes *cartooning* rather than illustration—there are far fewer reader preconceptions to deal with. Since I don't have to worry about drawing accurate automobiles or human feet, the drawing comes easier, more naturally, and emphasizes my strengths instead of my weaknesses (anatomy, machines, etc.).

And, to be honest, funny-animals are simply a lot more fun to draw than people. There's also a lot less competition in the field, so it's not as likely to get lost in the shuffle. I'm also attracted by the fact that "funny-animals" is one category *exclusive* to the cartoon artist. Be it animated, strip or series, the funny-animal is achieving something that cannot be done in any other medium—super-heroes, westerns, horror—all of these are replicated in novels, TV and live-action films. But you *can't* do funny-animals live-action. If you don't believe me, rent a copy of *Howard the Duck*.

I guess I've come full circle. My first primitive attempts at cartooning, in grade school, were to trace Snoopy comics. Eventually I wandered into the vast wasteland of super-hero comics (a field in which I am thoroughly incompetent) until I discovered *National Lampoon*, which taught me the value of cartoons as savage contemporary satire. Now, twenty years later, I'm back with the funny-looking dogs and cats and loving every minute.



Reed Waller



[Artist Reed Waller and writer Kate Worley are the creators of Omaha the Cat Dancer, *the much-banned explicit funny-animal series, as well as "SpeakingStone," currently appearing in* Critters. *Waller was also the co-founder (with Ken Fletcher) of* Vootie, *the watershed funny-animal cartoonists' APA (1976-1982), in which* Omaha *was developed.]*

Why do I use funny-animals? What do you mean? I just draw people the way I see them.

Really. For some artists, anthropomorphics are a form of fantasy, an exercise in "what-if." I never used them that way, I just found them a good vehicle for character drama and comedy. I've never had an easy time trying to translate human personalities to pen-and-ink; not their subtler sides, anyway. I find that funny-animals "play" better.

In *Omaha*, Kate and I don't make much of the fact that our characters are funny-animals, and we don't intend to. That would distract the readers, from the characters as "people," and from the story. And it would dilute the advantage of using funny-animals in the first place: the shorthand for typing personalities and temperaments. It works best if you can just forget they don't look quite human and react to them the way they make you feel. Let me explain what I mean.

If we make somebody a cat, we're saying: this individual is a quiet, reserved person, reflective, kind of a loner. Affectionate but not chummy. Sensitive and sensual. Serious rather than playful. Controlled rather than impulsive. Fights for blood, not for fun.

Okay, now if we make them a dog, we're saying: they are social, conformist. They've active, like to joke around, like group fun. Don't mind noise. Don't spend a lot of time thinking. Don't like to be alone. Love to play games, get our and around. Are spontaneous and cheerful.

And if a character doesn't exhibit the kind of behavior we expect from a particular animal (a boisterous cat, or a solitary dog)—we're saying: there's more to this person than meets the eye. There are reasons why they're different from what you'd expect. It makes them interesting.

There's another, more technical reason why funny-animals are better for *Omaha*. Our type of story calls for characters with softness, grace, without too many hard edges. But pen-and-ink is a medium of hard edges, and illustrators basically have two choices: they can render classically and get bold, muscular, impersonal figures which are great for action/adventure, or they can use simplified and/or exaggerated figures which are suitable for humorous stuff, and that's it. I didn't want either one, so I decided not to "render" humans at all. Nobody can tell me that my figure is "too cartoony" to look like a "real" funny-animal.

I guess that's ultimately the point: a picture of a funny-animal *is* a real "funny-animal." Funny-animals live only in the world of comics; they are completely at home there and can behave naturally no matter what situation you put them in. "Real" humans can't ever attain quite the same freedom.

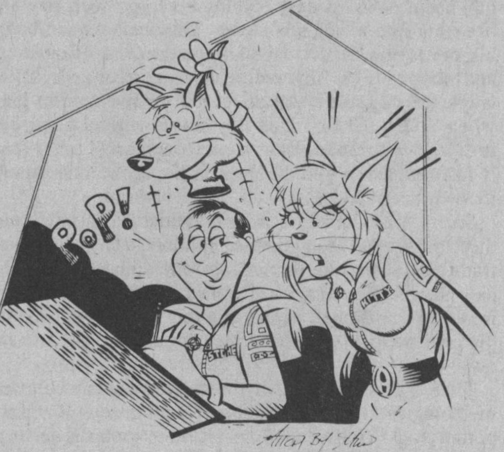
Ken Mitchroney

[Ken Mitchroney is the co-creator of Space Ark*; he's currently contining both that series and Robert Asprin's* Myth-Adventures, *both for Apple Comics, with his wife Beth, who conducted the following interview-like thing.]*

*Why have you decided to make your space comic book (*Space Ark*) a funny-animal book instead of a funny* human *book? Why did you choose a humorous approach?*

MITCHRONEY: Well, it kinda goes back to *Star Wars*, I guess. I was doing my normal funny-animal shtick. Saw the movie and thought, "Hey, it's worked with humans, how about funny-animals!" And that was that. It's my philosophy that if it's good with humans, try it with the fuzzy kids. Why, shucks, I'm just chompin' at the bit to do a funny-animal version of *Night and Fog*. . . ah, well—maybe it *doesn't* work with *all* things.

How did you decide which animals would portray which characters?



MITCHRONEY: *Want ads*, man! Ya gotta use those *classifieds!*

How did you get into drawing funny-animals? Who or what influenced your style?

MITCHRONEY: Boredom, boredom, boredom, boredom. Bored. Bored. *Bored.* You can get into doing *anything* if you have the time and you're bored off your wazoo. I was sick a lot as a kid (cue the violin—) and I was spending most of my time watching cartoons on the tube. So I drew, built models and watched movies and made pillows and candies out of the housepets—the real ones! You just can't get a wick to stick in a moving Labrador. I know—I tried! What influenced my style is a regular paycheck. Most of the folks responsible are:

C.C. Beck, for teaching me how to use a brush and showing me how to structure books;

Tex Avery, for letting me learn that all the world's rubber and that people will come around to funny-animals again;

Bob Clampett, for returning my calls, critiquing my work and talking me back into the business;

Buster Keaton, Jerry Lewis, Steven Spielberg, John Landis and the actors and directors that teach us comedy and timing and that teach us the cinematic eye; and

Beth Mitchroney, my wife and "Myth person," who learned the Polly Freas line to Kelly: "It's fine the way it looks—don't touch it!" And lots of people are responsible for the style and thinking, but I need to leave room for the other guys to say something, right, Kim?

What's the difference in using funny-animals as characters rather than humorous people?

MITCHRONEY: They're easier to draw. I can draw 'em in my sleep. And if you've seen *Space Ark*, you can tell! I'm a very well rested cartoonist—been thinking of changing my name to "Rip Van Mitchroney." Don't know, though—I'll have to sleep on it. Seriously, animals work better in comedy. Like Tex said, "Ya couldn't get Chaplin in a milk bottle."

Do you draw for adults or children? How does this influence you?

MITCHRONEY: We do it the "Warner Bros. way" If it's funny to me and to Mark Cantrell (*Space Ark* co-writer), then it's bound to be funny to anyone who'll plunk down $1.75 for a book about funny-animals in space. I can't draw the "adult" stuff. It rubs me the wrong way—no pun intended. Some of the guys call me the Jerry Falwell of funny-animals, but it's not true. I'm no prude, but I just don't think it's the right medium for it. You never saw Stan Laurel do porno, did you?

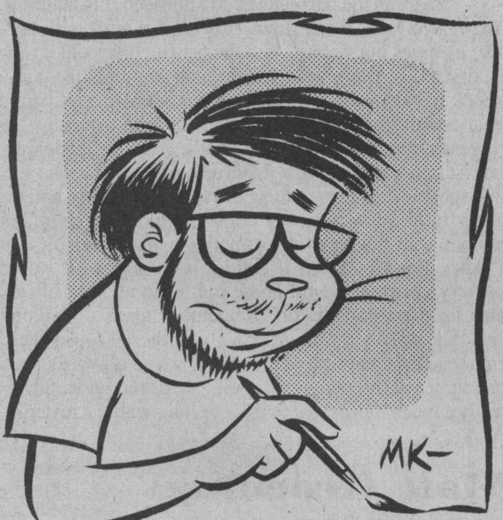
What makes funny-animal comics funny?

MITCHRONEY: Custard pies, seltzer water, pratfalls, bad jokes, dumb visuals, goofy sound effects. And an artist-writer team that spends more time giggling and laughing than working.

What do you think has lead to the proliferation of anthropomorphic comic books, and which is your favorite?

MITCHRONEY: Because when we were kids, all we had to do was turn on the TV and there they were: Hours of cartoons, a place to go to laugh and enjoy a mindless good time. These things stick with you as you grow up. And when you get old enough to do something about it, you do. I think most of us in the cartoon business now can confess to knowing the words to "The Michigan Rag" and "We Are the Boys of the Chorus." And we get hyper when we hear "A *Bob* Clam*pett* Car-tooooon!" You liked it when you were a kid and you get a chance to do it for a living—if you can call it that—now. You get a chance to create, entertain and make people laugh. Sometimes that makes it all worthwhile. The book I like the most is one I've read for 20 years plus, the classic *Real Screen Comics* and *Fox and Crow.* That's what got me into comics. I hope to do one, one day—if the pies and seltzer come back like Tex said.

Mike Kazaleh



[Mike Kazaleh is the creator of The Adventures of Captain Jack, *as well as being one of the workhorses behind the new* Mighty Mouse *Saturday-morning cartoon series.]*

Why funny-animals? I don' know. Good question. Achooly, it's a stoopid question. I suppose I could say it goes back to Aesop, but to say it went back to Paul Terry's Aesop's Fables of the '20s. And on to Porky Pig & Bugs Bunny, etc, would be more like it. Achooly it's just an aid to help caricatures and like that. No? How 'bout if I said using funny-animals makes fantasy more plausible and reality more palatable? That sounds intelligent. I just hope nobody finds out it's because I like to draw cartoon animals.

Steven A. Gallacci

[Steve Gallacci, interviewed in this issue, is the creator behind Albedo *and "Birthright" in* Critters. *He also contributes artwork to Eclipse Comics'* Fusion.*]*

"Why a duck?" Interesting you should ask that. My first actual finished multi-panel cartoon strip was of "Astro Duck," an obnoxious creature who hides behind his uniform to justify anti-social acts. I did it while stationed in West Germany, inspired by my obnoxious fellow service men. Erma Felna was originally a secondary character, but at things developed, she took over.

But back to the main point: why do funny-animals. Well, while in Germany, I did some illustrations for a briefing which included some funny-animal cartoons. I liked doing them, and at about the same time, had been picking up a lot of the old "ground level" comics, Star*Reach products and such, which included a lot of funny-animals. So, I started doing stuff—at first, the beforementioned Astroduck. Also, at about the same time, I tried some story writing, and doing illustrated versions, with pretty dubious results. Doing funny-animal versions was easier. At first, doing "straight" stories with anthropomorphics was just a hook. Animals have an appeal and touch of novelty that will attract a possible reader to a good, but non-traditional story. But by the time *Albedo #1* was done, the story background had developed to the point that it would work only with anthropomorphics (though some of my critics might argue otherwise).

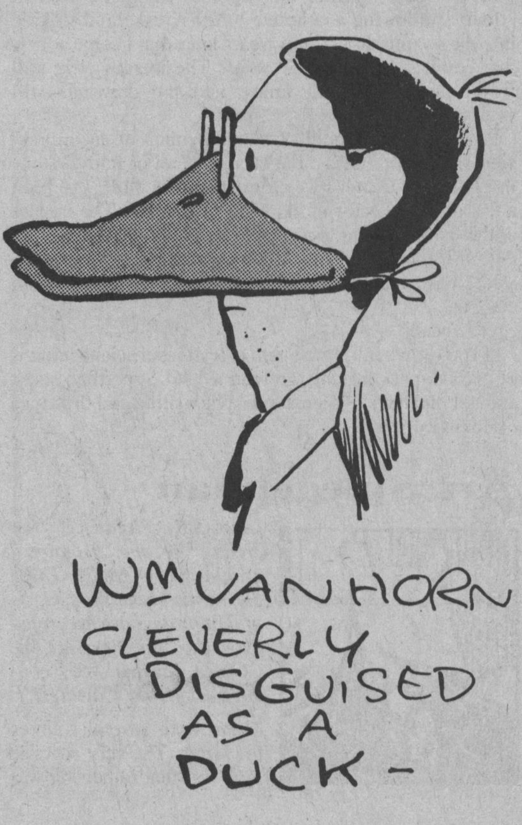
I still do "funny-animals" because I like them, they're fun, and I'm still not very good at commercial-grade "people" art.

William Van Horn

[Known to comics fans mainly as the creator of Nervous Rex, *William Van Horn is an award-winning cartoonist, animator, director, and author of children's books whose career stretches back a quarter of a century. He's currently developing a new series, "Angst," for* Critters.*]*

When Kim Thompson asked me if I'd like to contribute something to this special issue of *Amazing Heroes*, I said to myself (and to Kim): "Why not?" After all, although I'm relatively new to comic books, about two thirds of everything I've done commercially over the last 26 years has involved the use of cartoon animals.

Oh, I could be flip, of course (and mercifully brief) and say that cartoon animals are easier to draw and let it go at that. As an answer it would be partly true. But somehow I have a sneaking suspicion that my use of



anthropomorphism is, at least to some extent, a philosophical consideration rather than a mechanical one (even if cartoon animals *are* easier to draw!).

Animals, by their very presence as the stars of a feature, tell you right off what you're about to read is a fantasy. What else could it be, right? I mean, if there really are any talking ducks or mice I'd like to get me one. I'd make a fortune, and I wouldn't have to write or draw, and, best of all, I wouldn't have to *think*!

Furthermore, animals, whether funny or not, cannot fail to introduce a note of whimsy into any feature in which they appear. They can also make the unbearable bearable. I haven't had a chance to read *Maus*, but from the excerpts I've seen, surrogates for humans were necessary to make the material bearable. The European Jews are mice; the Nazis are cats. But even with good old anthropomorphism to the rescue, *Maus* is still a very sensitive, borderline subject for the comics.

For my part I find that I cannot write or draw anything unless it contains a liberal dose of whimsy. Perhaps this represents some flaw in my character—some failing that prevents me from taking anything too seriously. It just so happens, however, that cartoon animals are an excellent way to express my needs. (And remember, there are much easier ways to draw than musclebound heroes and their svelte women.)

Finally, leaving philosophy and mechanics behind, I think that the best reason of all for my use of cartoon animals is that I'm from a generation that had the good fortune to grow up with them and feel their influence. The earliest comic books that I remember having were cartoon animal comics. In 1942 I zeroed in on Floyd Gottfredson's "Mickey Mouse at the Bar None Ranch," a serial that was running in *Walt Disney's Comics* at the time. Mickey was my first hero (likewise Floyd Gottfredson, although I didn't know who he was until about 25 years later). At about the same time I had the first issue of *Animal Comics*. It contained the first appearance of Walt Kelly's *Pogo*. There was one image in that story that I remembered long after I'd forgotten where I'd seen it: Albert swallowing a concrete birthday cake and sinking into the swamp. It was only years later that I came across that comic, and you know what? The images were still fresh, the humor still funny, and the drawings still wonderful.

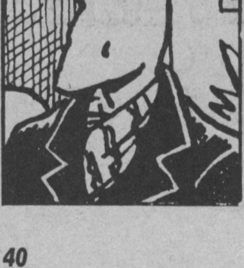
Oddly, Carl Barks did not make much of an impression on me until he did the classic "Can of Putty" story in 1944 [*Walt Disney's Comics and Stories #48*]. I've been a fan and a collector of his work ever since! The impact of these artists on me was indelible. I couldn't shake them even if I wanted to. Their characters and stories stand the test of time in a way that none of the super-heroes of the era can.

Go ahead!

If you're an adult, or contain at least a sufficient amount of mass to pass for one, go read a 1944 Superman story and tell me that it is a great piece of writing and drawing.

Horsefeathers!

Art Spiegelman



[Art Spiegelman is the creator of the acclaimed graphic novel Maus. *These comments about the genesis of that project are excerpted from the interview in* The Comics Journal *#65, conducted by Joey Cavalieri.]*

There were several sources for *Maus*. The very specific birth was that somebody was putting together a comic book called *Funny Aminal Comics* [*sic —ED.*], and I was invited to do a story for that book, whose only guideline was that it involve anthropomorphic characters. . .

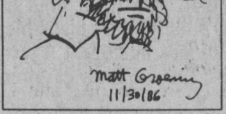
I was looking at some films at a film course that included a lot of early animated cartoons. I was really struck by the cat and mouse cartoons. I saw that the mice in those cartoons were very similar to the Negroes in the other cartoons that were being shown in the same days, and realized that this cat and mouse thing was just a metaphor for some kind of oppression. I wanted to do a comic strip in which the mice were blacks and the cats were the whites, using funny-animal style, and so I started trying to research things about Black history. And then just short-circuited there, realizing that I was never going to give this any authenticity, because I just didn't know the material, and I'd just be some kind of white liberal simp.

On the other hand, there was an involvement with oppression that was much closer to my own life: my father's and mother's experiences in concentration camps, and my own awareness of myself as a Jew. . . That's the genesis of that particular strip.

. . .This was the correct way to approach this material. The reason was, if one draws this kind of stuff with people, it comes out wrong. And the way it comes out wrong is, first of all, I've never lived through anything like that—knock on whatever is around to knock on—and it would be a counterfeit to try to pretend that the drawings are representations of something that's actually happening. I don't know exactly what a German looked like who was in a specific small town doing a specific thing. My notions are born of a few scores of photographs and a couple of movies. I'm bound to do something inauthentic.

Also, I'm afraid that if I did it with people, it would be very corny. It would come out as some kind of odd plea for my sympathy or "Remember the Six Million" and that wasn't my point exactly, either. To use these ciphers, cats and mice, is actually a way to allow you past the cipher at the people who are experiencing it. So it's really a much more direct way of dealing with the material.

Matt Groening



[Matt Groening is the cartoonist of Life in Hell, *which stars rabbits. Here he tells why he chose rabbits, in an excerpt from an interview originally printed in* Honk! *magazine.]*

The reason I draw rabbits. . . I used to draw all sorts of animals back in high school. I drew a comic strip called "Tales of the Enchanted Forest," somewhat inspired by *Pogo* by Walt Kelly, but my bears didn't really look like bears, they looked sort of like big mice, and my mice looked like dogs, and people couldn't tell what the dogs were. . .well, anyway, I had one rabbit character and they said, "Ah! A rabbit!" So that's why I stuck with rabbits; they're the easiest.

Tim Fuller

[Tim Fuller is the creator of the "Blue Beagle," currently appearing in Critters.*]*

In those early, formative years there was always a duck or a mouse available to entertain a young mind. They were

comforting and convenient and became good friends.

It was not until later that a larger potential for talking animals presented itself. As a quiet, imaginative child, I found books a wonderful escape. While visiting a favorite aunt, I found her library and spent many hours lost there. It was among the company of Twain and Swift that I discovered another great humorist, often overlooked, Walt Kelly. The book was "I Go Pogo" that I eagerly devoured. The impact was not immediate, although this was like nothing I'd ever seen. But with every visit, the book would be re-read and with each reading another level of meaning would be revealed. Those characters could not have been more real had they been human, but being animals somehow made their characteristics that much more human. They could make us laugh at our own foolishness. So for me, in choosing to work with funny animals the high point has been reached. I can only hope to entertain a fraction as well as I was delighted by those simple swamp characters. But when we need to take ourselves less seriously as human beings, I hope there will always be a duck or a mouse or even a possum to show us how.

Andy Ice

[Andy Ice is the illustrator of Blackthorne's Alien Ducklings *and* Guerilla Groundhog*—or was, since both have been cancelled. See below for current career details.]*

It was not my intention to burst upon the comic world by drawing books like Alien Ducklings and Guerilla Groundhog. These books were offered to me, and I happily drew them, as funny-animals have always come naturally to me.

When I was ten years old, I could differentiate between a Bob Clampett and a Friz Freleng Bugs Bunny cartoon. I understood why Donald Duck comic books were so good, while the Warner Bros. characters didn't make the transition to comic books so well. I knew the secret words that would shrink Mary Jane to the size of Sniffles, and I thought that Stumbo the Giant was one of the great underrated series.

All of this is not very useful in real life. Especially since none of my friends shared my enthusiasm. I did make up my mind that I was going to be a cartoonist, and it was the funny-animal books that really sparked my imagination, and gave me direction.

As a college student in the mid-'70s majoring in fine art, I began to wonder where I would actually work. There wasn't much of a market for funny-animals at the time, and I set my funny comic goals aside, thinking that the only available market was for super-heroes. I became friends with a cartoonist named Mark Lasky, who was doing a strip for the school newspaper called *Seaside Society.* His strip was populated with a group of animals who lived on the beach by our University of Bridgeport campus. There was a snail who lived in a discarded beer can, a philosopher frog, and a pair of twin ladybugs.

Mark woke me up to the discipline of strip writing, and developing funny-animals, when I had been immersed in Spider-Man. I wasn't convinced that was the direction I should go in, but it brought me back to the things that turned me on to comics in the first place.

Mark was later assistant to Mell Lazarus on *Momma,* and ultimately took over *Nancy,* when Ernie Bushmiller died. The downside of this is that Mark himself died of cancer a year later. I bring this up here becasue he was definitely an example to me of disciplining yourself to do it right, and to pursue your goals until you attain them.

I like funny-animal comics. They're fun to draw and fun to look at. At their best they can teach us things about themselves in an entertaining way, with some terrific stories.

Currenly, I am drawing "Bozo" and "Laurel and Hardy" for Blackthorne. While they are not funny-animals, much of the approach and style is similar, and they are very satisfying. I'm also drawing "Battle Beasts," which I think is an interesting combination of super-hero action and straight cartooning. I'm excited about all these projects, which makes this whole crazy business worthwhile.

Marc Schirmeister

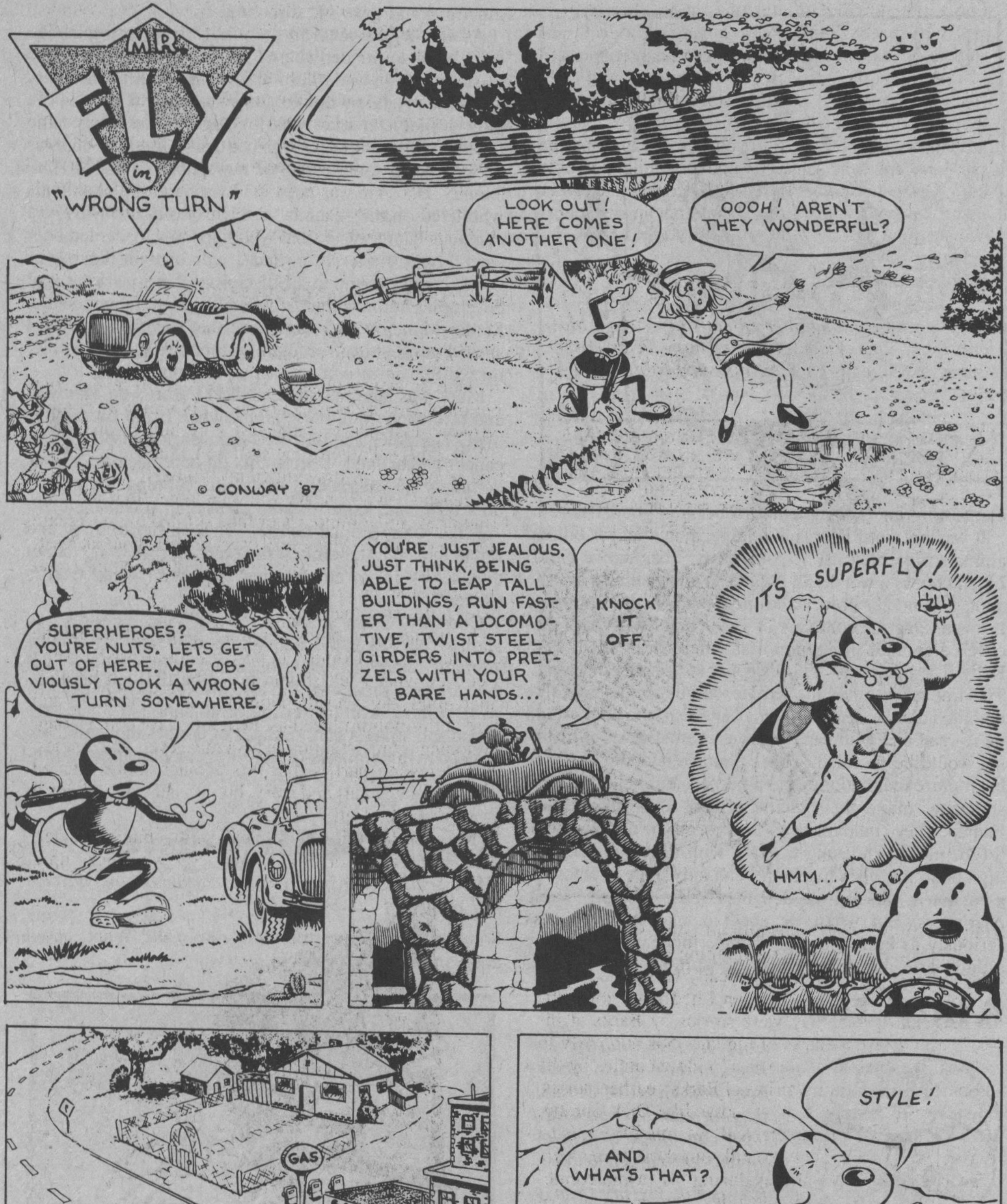
[Marc Schirmeister is a freelance cartoonist, and the central mailer of Rowrbrazzle.*]*

So, why do I like to draw funny-animals? What, now I need an excuse? Aw heck!

Bob Conway

[Bob Conway is the creator of Mr. Fly, whose adventures will be appearing in Critters.*]*

My interest in the "funny-animal" genre stems, not from the legendary work of Carl Barks or Walt Kelly, but rather from the classic theatrical cartoons of Fleischer, Warner


MR. FLY in "WRONG TURN"
WHOOSH
LOOK OUT! HERE COMES ANOTHER ONE!
OOOH! AREN'T THEY WONDERFUL?
© CONWAY '87
SUPERHEROES? YOU'RE NUTS. LETS GET OUT OF HERE. WE OBVIOUSLY TOOK A WRONG TURN SOMEWHERE.
YOU'RE JUST JEALOUS. JUST THINK, BEING ABLE TO LEAP TALL BUILDINGS, RUN FASTER THAN A LOCOMOTIVE, TWIST STEEL GIRDERS INTO PRETZELS WITH YOUR BARE HANDS...
KNOCK IT OFF.
IT'S SUPERFLY!
HMM...
GAS
GARAGE
OKAY, I'LL ADMIT THEY CAN BE EXCITING. WHO WOULDN'T WANT TO BE ABLE TO DO SUPER FEATS? BUT I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU SAY, NO MATTER HOW POWERFUL, THERE'S STILL SOMETHING WE HAVE THEY CAN'T TOUCH...
AND WHAT'S THAT?
STYLE!
END.

Brothers, and others, specifically Disney from their beginnings throughout the 1930s.

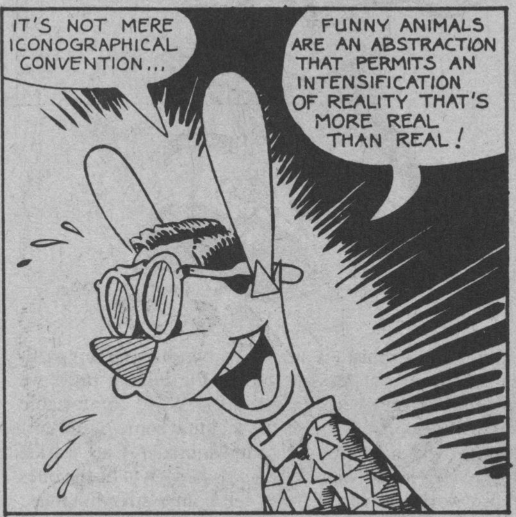
Until home video became commonplace, most of these cartoons were lost to me and I didn't have the pleasure of viewing them until after my childhood. Anyone who has watched the luscious Silly Symphonies and Mickey Mouse cartoons from 1935-1937 has witnessed some of the most breathtaking art ever created, culminating with *Snow White,* a timeless classic.

Not all were lost to me, however, and the few I had seen inspired and led to the creation of Mr. Fly in 1975. I chose a fly because it was about the only "critter" I could think of at the time that hadn't been extensively used. His similarity to the early Mickey is more than a little coincidental. That first Mr. Fly story finally appeared years later in *Acme Comics #2*.

I feel funny-animals have more chance at capturing the naivete, innocence and sense of wonder of childhood over the long underwear guys. My eventual goal is to transfer the magic of the '30s cartoons onto paper in my strips, color and all.

Mark Armstrong

[Aside from contributing intermittently to Critters, *Mark Armstrong was instrumental in designing Peter Porker, Spectacular Spider-Ham (and his supporting cast) for Marvel Comics.]*


IT'S NOT MERE ICONOGRAPHICAL CONVENTION...
FUNNY ANIMALS ARE AN ABSTRACTION THAT PERMITS AN INTENSIFICATION OF REALITY THAT'S MORE REAL THAN REAL!

I grew up thinking of funny-animal comics, indeed all humorous comics, as being a dumping ground for cartoonists who couldn't draw realistically enough to handle super-hero assignments. Although I had read stories by Carl Barks early on, they were stories by Barks at his worst—the burnt-out Barks of the late '50s and early to mid-'60s. And having "outgrown" kiddie comics by the mid-'60s, I missed out on reprints of Barks's earlier stories. So my favorite cartoonists were guys like Dick Sprang, Curt Swan, and a little later Neal Adams. Of course I had many more favorites later still; but those three were my favorite comic book artists during my prime comic-book reading years, and their styles were my principal models as I experimented with the medium in college.

At the start of my last year in college, Duckburg Books & Comics was opened up at the edge of campus. Dennis Budd, owner and operator of that comics shop, was a lifelong Barks fan. He practically twisted my arm to get me to read some of the early Barks stories. And as I began to catch some of his enthusiasm for Barks, he gave me full access to his fabulous personal collection of first edition Barks stories.

Within several years I got to read most of Barks's comic book work. And as I read those stories, I experimented with funny-animal cartooning of my own. And as I experimented, Dennis critiqued those experiments with all the insight of a long-time fan of funny-animal stories in general and Barks stories in particular. Dennis played the role of a mentor, guiding me to a rather deep appreciation for Barksian humor and storytelling.

The peak of that relationship came when Dennis started publishing a fanzine, *Surf City Comics & Stories*, and became my first editor and publisher. "Super Santa," which appeared in *Surf City* #3, and which was recently reprinted in *Critters* #11, was my first published comic book story. And although I did some more things for subsequent issues of *Surf City*, as well as other things for other fanzines, it was "Super Santa" that gave me the opportunity to do "Rocket Rabbit" for Charlton. And it was "Rocket Rabbit" that opened the door for me at Marvel. In many ways, Dennis Budd is responsible for my comic book career. Certainly, Dennis is entirely responsible for my choosing to do funny-animal stories.

Kevin Lenagh

[Kevin Lenagh is the creator of Domino Chance, *a self-published funny-animal science fiction series.]*

ANTHROPOMORPHISM (an thra pa mawr' fism) n. the conception of God as a human being with human attributes. ANTHROPOMORPHIZE v.t. to invest with human qualities.

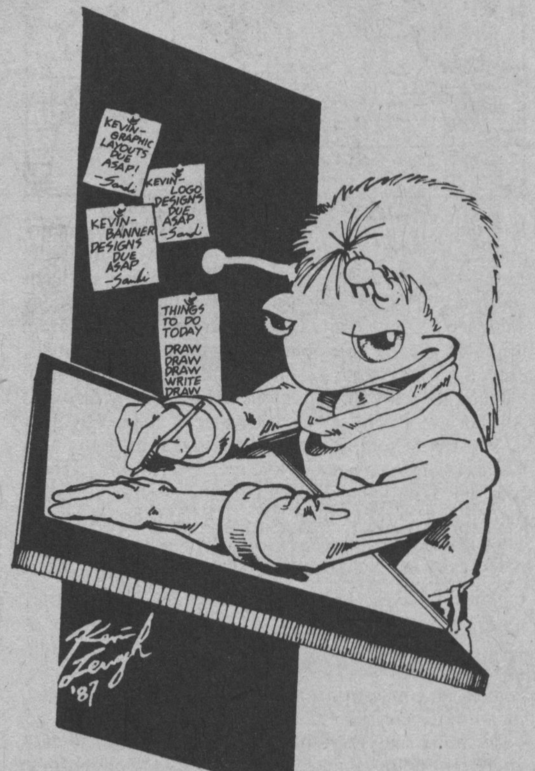
Well, this is all interesting stuff, but what the heck does it have to do with drawing funny-animals?

It depends on how heavy you want to get. In some ways I find drawing Domino easier than if I had to do Captain America or Spider-Man every day. He started out, at least, as a simpler form, fewer lines, kind of bouncy and animation-like.

He didn't stay that way.

The stories I got telling got more complicated, and the way I had drawn Domino in past situations wasn't going to convey what I felt should be going through his flat, paper mind. As a result, Domino has gotten more and more anthropomorphized as the issues have come along, developing more definition in his limbs, eyes, and clothes. The interesting part is that he's a much more detailed character now, in art and story, but it hasn't slowed down my work time at all.

The other definition above deals with a much broader, yet internal scope of things. Anybody who picks up a


KEVIN- GRAPHIC LAYOUTS DUE ASAP! -Sandi
KEVIN- LOGO DESIGNS DUE ASAP -Sandi
KEVIN- BANNER DESIGNS DUE ASAP -Sandi
THINGS TO DO TODAY DRAW DRAW DRAW WRITE DRAW
Kevin Lenagh '87

pencil and doodles knows the frustration and satisfaction of creation. Not the big cosmic bang, the little cosmic bang you get from something escaping from your subconscious.

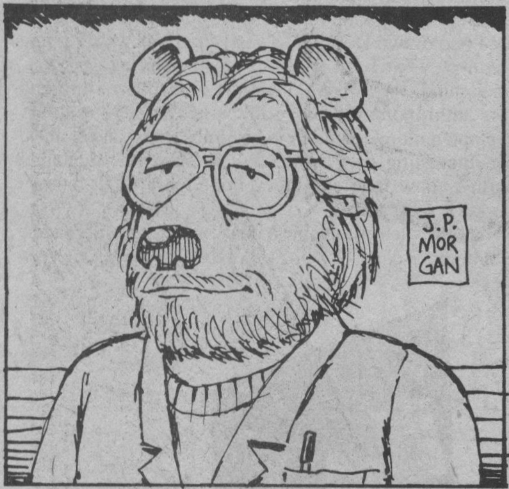
Funny-animals, from the second you open a comic, relax you. Their appearance is easy on the eye and softens your defenses, letting them know things about yourself and others that you might not have observed in other media. You accept wild ideas easier from a "cartoon" than from another person, even if the wild idea is that we're not always nice to each other and other species (races) aren't that much different from us. And you accept it without feeling like you were preached to.

But what do I know, I just like the darn things. They make me laugh.

John P. Morgan

[Aside from being a prolific mini-comics artist, John P. Morgan recently created Fission Chicken for Critters.*]*

Why do I draw funny-animals? I dunno. . .all my efforts prior to Fission Chicken featured human (more or less) characters. I'd originally conceived of F.C. as a one-shot gag for the cover of creative 'zine *Inside Joke,* but the more I considered it, the more appealing the idea became.

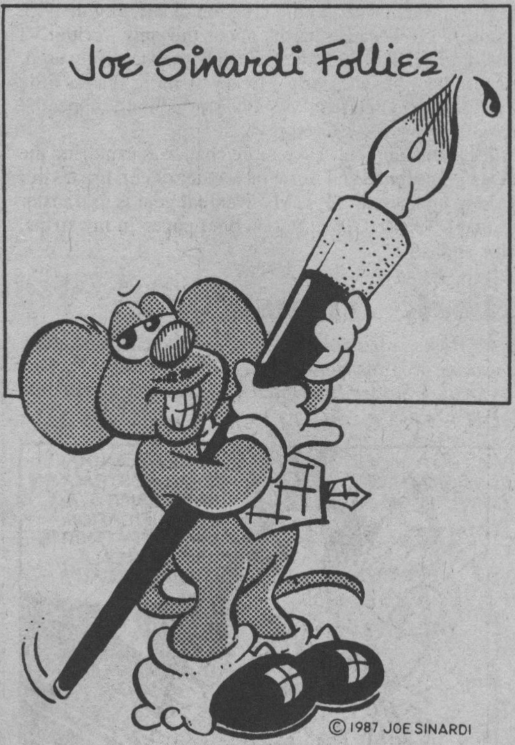


For some reason, it seemed easier to be funny with anthropomorphic characters; slapstick violence and silly dialogue lent themselves better to super-powered chickens and gun-toting squirrels, you know? (All the really funny animated cartoons—and I mean Warner Bros. stuff from the 1940s to early '50s—have featured humanoid animals, excepting characters like Elmer Fudd or Yosemite Sam, but they generally served as foils to Bugs Bunny, anyway.) And for me, I think it's also a matter of style. Way back in Parsons School of Design, I had Randy Enos as a teacher, and at one point he told me, "You know. . .I think your style is no style!" (He said this in a descriptive, rather than arch manner.) Could be. . .It's hard for me to tell, subjective viewpoint and all. Maybe the use of animals is the extra push my work needed—who knows?

Joe Sinardi

[Joe Sinardi is the creator of Maxwell Mouse.]

I love being a funny-animal artist. I hate being *called* a "funny-animal artist." Cartoonists, having much in common with actors, should try to avoid being typecast.



Anthropomorphism is an extremely satisfying story-telling device. It's at least as old as the human race; we encounter it very early in our lives. We're comfortable with it. Comforting, too, is the fact that some of the cartoonists who have favored funny-animals—Carl Barks, George Herriman, Walt Kelly—*also* happen to be the ones whose work virtually defines the comic strip medium.

I've found that most cartoon characters "come alive" as I develop and work with them. Funny-animals come alive with a vengeance. They are *strong* characters.

Ducks behaving like ducks: big deal. People behaving like people: we've seen it. Ducks behaving like people: comic book history! Anthropomorphic stardom!

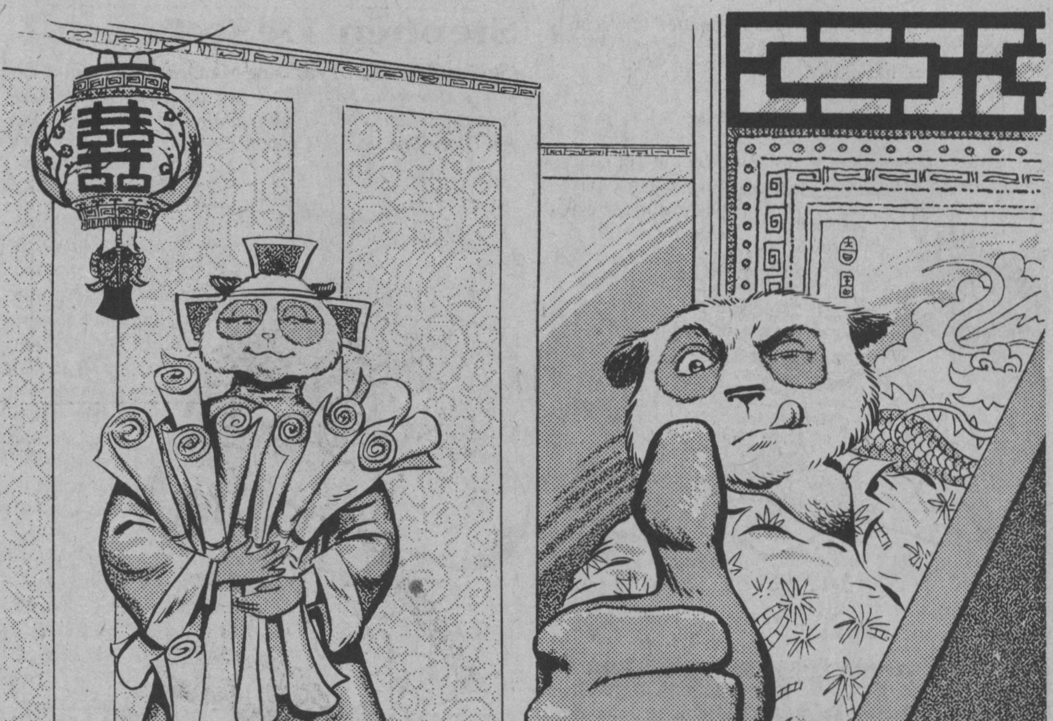
They take over. Maxwell Mouse was a mere sketch when I met him. Plans to make him the "host" of an anthology comic were scrapped because he demanded a 40-page book all to himself. Wait. Not just one book. He got an entire *series* of his own. I still don't think he's satisfied.

These animals may be funny, but they're no fools.

Monica Sharp & Dave Garcia

[Monica Sharp and Dave Garcia are the creators of Panda Khan*; Garcia is currently inking* The Trouble With Girls.*]*

When they're little, doesn't eveyone pretend their animals can talk? Our pets have distinct personalities—we know their quirks as well as we do our own. To me, animals always seemed like people in furry suits. When I played make-believe with my little sisters, I generally was a talking tiger or lion. One of the first strips Dave remembers creating was "Animal Rangers" when he was about nine years old. It was just a bunch of forest rangers who were animals. I guess we just like animals. *Panda Khan* the comic resulted from Panda Khan the painting. We never said to each other, "Gee, let's do a strip about pandas instead of one about superheroes"; that's just the way it turned out. Man tends to overrate himself and his tech-



nology. I think animals have an intelligence and probably a civilization that equals (surpasses?) mankind's; we just haven't learned how to decipher it. We want to tell a story. Everyone's heard that bit of writing advice, "Write what you know." Well, we write about people in furry suits. If aliens ever appear in Panda Khan, they'll just be people in rubbery suits.

Some people think animal stories have to be humorous. They forget or don't know about all the folklore with animals as the heroes and villains and gods. Primitive man considered himself a brother of the earth and respected animals. Maybe that's what bothers some people about "anthropomorphics": the animal acts like humans but don't have to be silly.

Daan Jippes

[The Dutchman Daan Jippes is best known for his superb Donald Duck strips done for overseas consumption (now showing up in Gladstone comics, for which he does the covers.) He is currently working on various secret Disney projects.

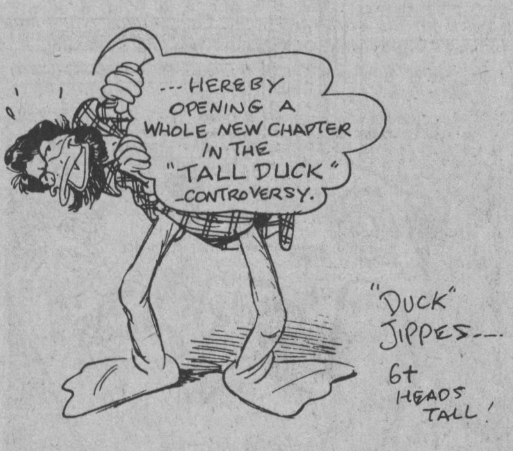
I like ducks because. . .

. . .*human* characters stand at least six heads tall, therefore tend to bump into balloons, or generally clog up the height of a standard panel! (see illustration)

Animal characters—at least that's what they told me—*don't* exceed three or four heads, and their bodily height-width ratio conforms to the "field" of the standard panel more pleasingly. ("Field" is an animation term I've learned.)

Of course, there is the four-legged, low-axle type of animal—like alligators, snakes, or worms—to consider, if you like, but in my *lively* type of stories I insist on characters being able to throw in characteristic attitudes . . . like telling another character to "go duck yourself" (with that winning hand-gesture, you know)—and to have a *silkworm* do a thing like that no matter how cutely designed, *just* looks a little awkward!

So that leaves me *ducks*, see?


---HEREBY OPENING A WHOLE NEW CHAPTER IN THE "TALL DUCK" -CONTROVERSY.
"DUCK" JIPPES---
6+ HEADS TALL!

Another thing: *ducks* tell the reader he/she better not expect a barrage of real-world conventions in that particular type of story—like characters being tied down by "gravity's pull," for instance!

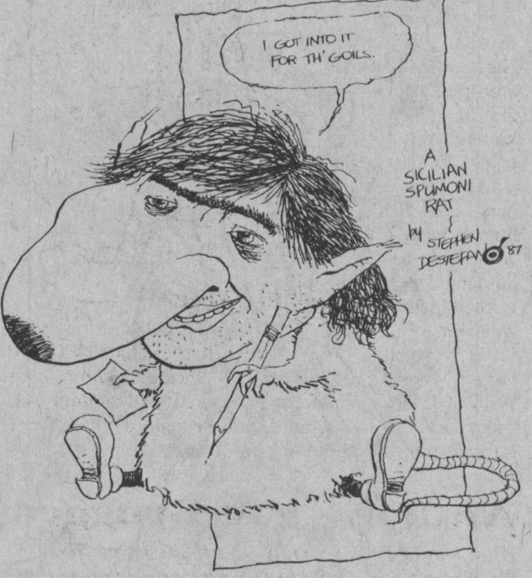
I personally don't like those, so why should he/she? How boring!!

So there you are again: *ducks!*

I've done *rabbits* too, you know!

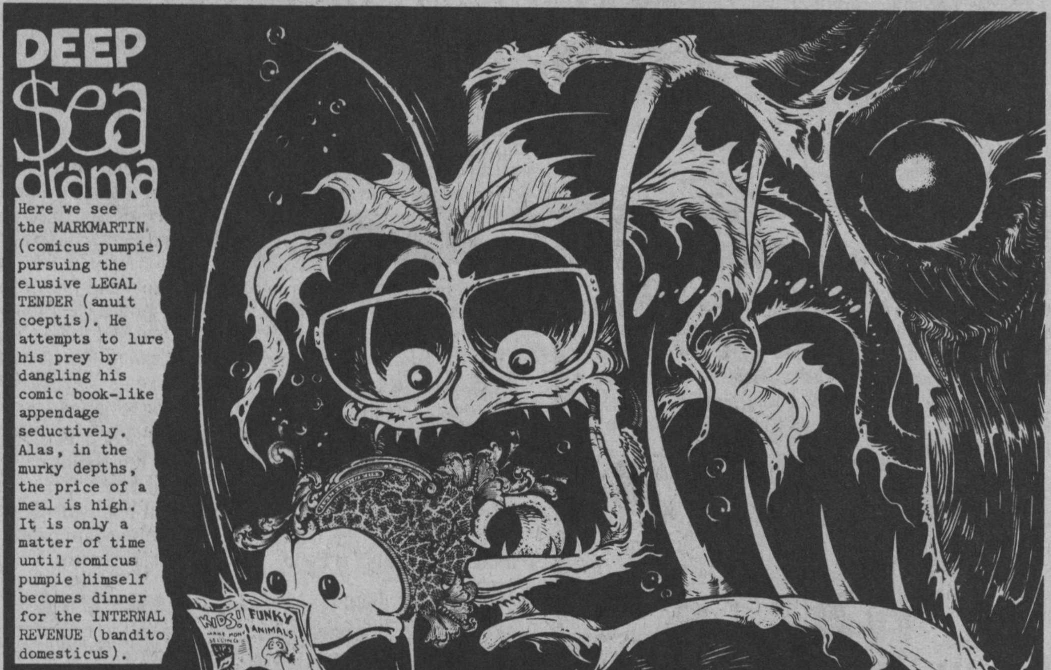
Stephen DeStefano

[Stephen DeStefano's 'Mazing Man *featured a character with a dog head, but that's just an excuse—he's here because we know he's a funny-animal artist at heart. As you'll see one day in* Critters.*]*


I GOT INTO IT FOR TH' GOILS.
A SICILIAN SPUMONI RAT by STEPHEN DESTEFANO '87

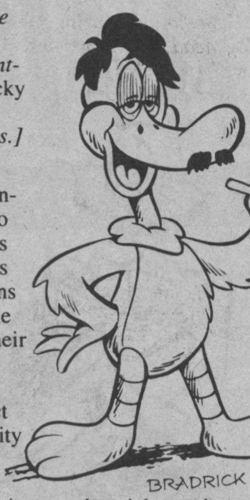
Mark Martin

[Still trying to live down his reputation as "the best Frank Miller parodist of them all"—based on his Gnatrat *and* Darerat *titles—to say nothing of the economic discomfiture his Mighty Pumpkin Enterprises suffered when the black-and-white implosion hit, Mark Martin sent us the following cartoon summing up his career.]*


DEEP $ea drama
Here we see the MARKMARTIN (comicus pumpie) pursuing the elusive LEGAL TENDER (anuit coeptis). He attempts to lure his prey by dangling his comic book-like appendage seductively. Alas, in the murky depths, the price of a meal is high. It is only a matter of time until comicus pumpie himself becomes dinner for the INTERNAL REVENUE (bandito domesticus).
FUNKY ANIMALS

Jim Bradrick

[Jim Bradrick is the creator of Wacky Squirrel, who recently starred in a Wacky Squirrel Special *by Dark Horse Comics.]*


BRADRICK '87

Far from being restricted to cartoonists, the tendency to antropomorphism is almost universal, as witness: the millions of pet owners in the world, who give their pets—even fish!—human names, and who strain to detect humanoid personality in their pets' behavior.

My personal favorites are the trickster characters, like Woody, Bugs, Daffy, Heckle & Jeckle, and my own Wacky. Trickster animals are as old as literature and storytelling, including the Gallic Reynard the Fox, Br'er Rabbit, and the coyote of Navajo legend.

Anthony Van Bruggen

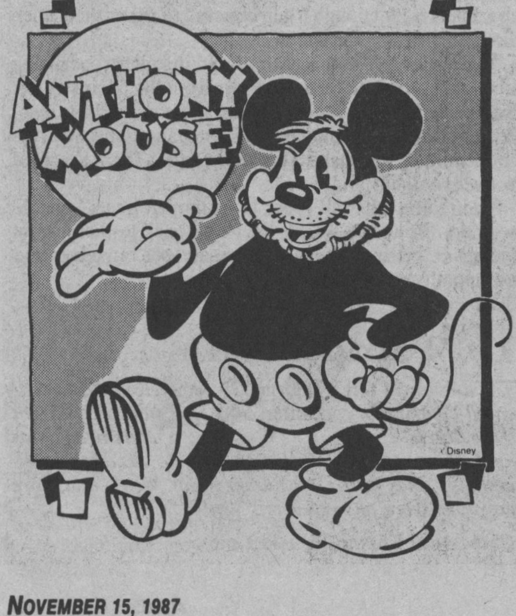
[Best known for his work on back-ups in his friend Ty Templeton's Stig's Inferno *(for which he co-created the fearsome Plasma Monkeys of Zaton IV), Anthony Van Bruggen is currently the Creative Designer at the Walt Disney Company in Toronto. He is also inking Templeton's teddy-bear story.]*

One word. . .NOSTALGIA. nos-tal-gi-a: Any longing for something far away or long ago.

I was born in the early '60s, but I've always felt my Cartoonist soul belonged in the '20s and '30s.

Krazy Kat, Bugs, Daffy, Porky, Felix the Cat, Droopy, Sparkplug, Eugene the Jeep, and, of course, Mickey Mouse. Names that stir fond memories for all of us.

Today, in a comic-book world full of mutant superheroes, funny-animals represent to me a return to the good old days. When three-foot-high mice in pants and gloves were the heroes and no one ever died.

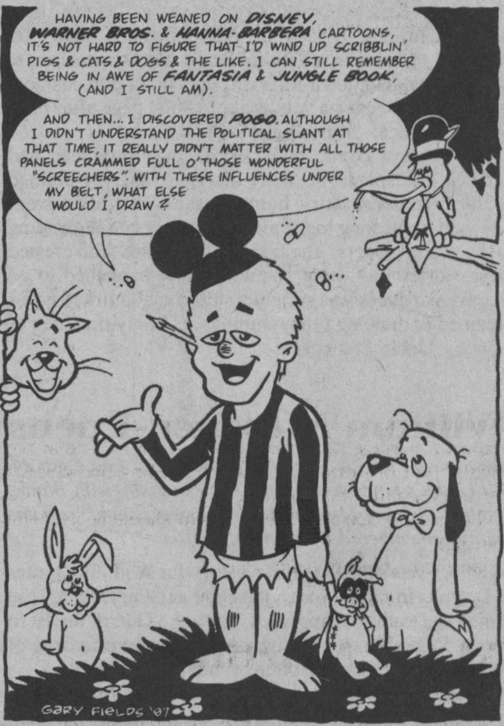

ANTHONY MOUSE!
© Disney

I'm proud to be amongst those who carry on this fine tradition. . .

. . .I can't believe I get paid to do it.

Gary Fields

[Noted for his work on Threat, *Gary Fields is the man behind "Superswine" in* Kaptain Keen and Kompany. . .*to say nothing of* Canine the Barbarian, *drawn for* Cracked.*]*


HAVING BEEN WEANED ON DISNEY, WARNER BROS. & HANNA-BARBERA CARTOONS, IT'S NOT HARD TO FIGURE THAT I'D WIND UP SCRIBBLIN' PIGS & CATS & DOGS & THE LIKE. I CAN STILL REMEMBER BEING IN AWE OF FANTASIA & JUNGLE BOOK, (AND I STILL AM).
AND THEN... I DISCOVERED POGO. ALTHOUGH I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THE POLITICAL SLANT AT THAT TIME, IT REALLY DIDN'T MATTER WITH ALL THOSE PANELS CRAMMED FULL O'THOSE WONDERFUL "SCREECHERS". WITH THESE INFLUENCES UNDER MY BELT, WHAT ELSE WOULD I DRAW?
GARY FIELDS '87

Don Rosa

[A long-time fan artist and writer, creator of The Pertwillaby Papers *and its spin-off* Captain Kentucky, *Don Rosa finally realized his ultimate cartoonists' dream last year when he began drawing Uncle Scrooge and Donald Duck stories for Gladstone Comics.]*

The question has been asked as to why we choose to write and draw comic strips involving anthropomorphic characters. . ."funny-animals." I'll be very interested in reading how the other contributors will respond to this query. In *my* particular case, the answer is rather simple: I don't consider myself a funny-animal cartoonist and I have no special interest in creating comics based on such critters.

Since my earliest memories, I have always adored Carl Barks's Uncle $crooge, not because he was a duck or a human or a pipewrench. . .but because he was Uncle $crooge. I never really viewed these characters as ducks, nor did they speak with those odd Disney voices in my mind; in my eyes they were *people*, or perhaps, simply, *beings* Even as a child I could sense that Barks never had a particular love of drawing funny-animals—he always dreamed of creating his own strips involving real people. In many of his older Duck adventures the supporting characters were all humans, until the editors told him to stick to populating Duckburg with critters. His compromise was those odd *dog* creatures with the human ears, and no tails or fur. When I was a kiddie, I thought they were supposed to be *people*, not *dogs*. My earliest scribblings, all of which I've saved, all involved human characters, though they all had those round, black noses—

it was only recently that I realized all my old home-made comic books were imitations of Barks's Duckburg dog-people.

Recently someone sent me copies of an Italian comic which purportedly tells Donald Duck's life story, beginning when he hatched from an egg in a nest. This idea strikes me as almost *sick*. It would have seemed quite bizarre to me even when I was a wee tad if Barks had ever shown Donald being *hatched* or even plucking a feather off his tail. Even now, to my eyes, $crooge McDuck is a far more realistic depiction of a "person" than is any Uncanny X-Man or New Mutant. Once you "accept" the idea of a Talking Duck, Barks's stories are quite logical and down-to-earth; they don't pile cosmos-spanning nonsense on you like cordwood page after page like any typical "super-hero" comic.

The greatest comic book stories ever produced had detailed craftsmanship, witty dialogue, sharply-defined characterizations, satiric humor, a sense of grand adventure, self-respecting logic, and were never condescending to the young readers. The fact that the genius who created these stories was using characters that happened to be shaped like *ducks* was simply a superficial quirk. I never dreamed of drawing funny-animals. . . I only dreamed of drawing Uncle $crooge!

William Messner-Loebs

[Best known for his work on Jonny Quest *and* Journey, *Bill Loebs's funny-animal work doesn't stop with Bandit and the occasional beaver: his "Bunny of Death" remains fondly remembered by many of us.]*

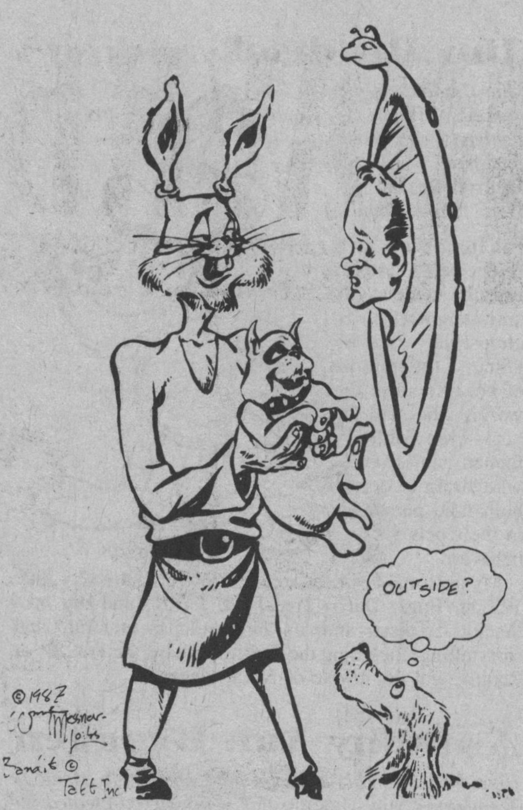
In 1983, I was asked to create a story for A+Plus Comics in Detroit. In "The Worm, the Hare and the Desert," the Bunny of Death first appeared, battling "Gurrrk the Hero Worm." The Bunny has always been my own favorite of all my characters. I've often wondered why.

Perhaps in the same way that a ventriloquist's dummy can express lusts, or anger or greed that we find inappropriate, so a large, dangerous rabbit can be outrageously evil and leave its creator untouched. And since most of us *become* cartoonists as a way of evading moral responsibility, such a character is very seductive.

Also, the use of a "funny-animal" creates a very forgiving attitude in the well-disposed reader. After *this*, almost anything else one does looks realistic by comparison. The most incredible juxtapostions of time or place, the most unbelievable pun names or people-as-metaphors are more easily accepted because of the presence of this impossible central character. Social satire can be stated more baldly, without seeming heavy-handed, and even anatomy and perspective can be fudged, a little, because of the latitude allowed the funny animal genre. What a *great* racket!

Actually, I've done relatively few pages with the Bunny, and yet each story seems to be tied into my artistic development. The first was five pages long and it was the first time I had managed to be stylistically consistent through an entire story (giving you some idea of just *how* erratic my artwork was at the time). This is probably another reason for my abiding affection for the character. Also, not inconsequentially, the stories *worked*. People actually *liked* them (another innovation for 1983!). I am still better known in some Detroit quarters as "Bill, the killer Bunny."

The Bunny was easy to draw. Very easy. Appallingly easy. I drew him on nearly everything I owned. I drew him in convention sketches as everyone from Frankenstein to Jack the Ripper. And it was in trying to duplicate the ease and clarity with which I drew the Bunny, that I stumbled upon the style that I eventually used in *Journey*.



So in that sense I owe my career to the fluffy-tailed little murderer.

The Bunny belongs to the first of two categories of "funny-animal" stories. It deals with animals as human-metaphors. They may appear to be ducks or wolves, but the artist, and the audience too, instinctively assumes these are humans and what we are seeing is what they are *inside*, a kind of moral X-ray. *Omaha* and *Maus* are the purest of these kind of stories.

The second type is one I've only begun to dabble in. In it, animals act in a realistic way, but are given the ability to rationalize their actions. *Garfield* is an example of this, at least in a good many of the strips. What I've been trying to do, with both my Bandit stories in *Jonny Quest* and with Troff-snrr-rrlll in *Journey* is to only gild the animal characters with enough "humanness" to make their alien thought processes available to us.

Yes, "alien." There is, I think, an instinctual yearning amongst humans to free ourselves from the chains of our preconceptions, to see ourselves and the world afresh. Perhaps this is why animals fascinate us so; why we dress up as animals and make them dress as us. There is a need to *become* them and escape.

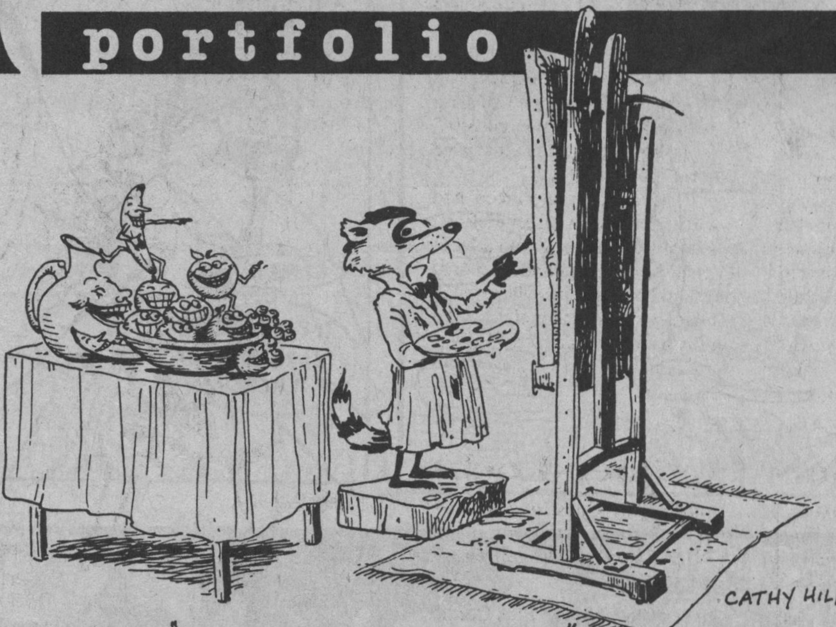
And that is what all types of "funny-animals" enable us to do, for a little while. We come back to them again and again, artist and viewer alike, and see ourselves and are appalled and refreshed.

Ty Templeton

[The creator of Stig's Inferno, *Ty Templeton is an occasional contributor to* Critters; *his next story is "A Right to the Blues," coming in #23, starring a teddy-bear blues band. His answer to the question "why do you draw funny-animals?" may be the most to the point. Would that more questions were answered this way.]*

'Cause Kim Thompson asked me to.

ROWRBRAZZLE portfolio



"CRITICISM FROM THE SUBJECT"

CATHY HILL©86

Funny-animal fans may not be as pervasive as costumed-hero fans, but they are around—and they're organized. The Disney fans are rallying around the Gladstone Disney comic books such as *Mickey Mouse* and *Uncle Scrooge Adventures*. These present both reprints of the classic Duck and Mouse tales by Carl Barks, Floyd Gottfredson, and others of their period, and new stories which aim at the same quality by such modern authors as Don Rosa, Daan Jippes, and Fred Milton. There are also specialty fanzines for Disney fans such as *The Barks Collector* and *The Duckburg Times*. The fans of *Pogo Possum*/Walt Kelly, and other famous funny-animal titles and cartoonists also have their clubs and fanzines.

The biggest gathering of general funny-animal fans may be through *Rowrbrazzle*, started in February 1984 (*The Comics Journal* #90). *Rowrbrazzle* is either a club, a fanzine, or a collection of fanzines, depending upon how you look at it. It is limited to 50 members, each of whom have to print a small fanzine of their own to share with the other members. The individual fanzines are all sent to *Rowrbrazzle*'s Official Editor who staples them together into a single large issue every three months and mails a copy to each member. Every member has to contribute to at least every other issue, so each *Rowrbrazzle* issue usually consists of 20 to 30 different sections of two to a dozen pages apiece, for an average total of 150 to 250 pages. Members also have to contribute postage money to get their copies of the quarterly issues.

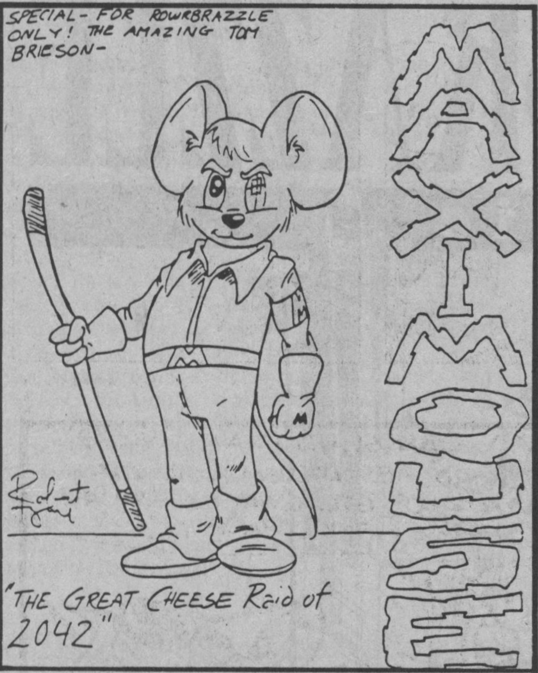
Current *Rowrbrazzle* members include such comics creators as Steve Gallacci (*Albedo*) and Mike Kazaleh (*The Adventures of Captain Jack*), several professional TV animators, a few animation students at Cal Arts, and regular funny-animal fans from all over. The membership changes slowly, as fans drop out (usually for failing to contribute personal fanzines frequently enough) and new applicants take their place. *Rowrbrazzle*'s membership is currently full. Fans interested in further information or in getting on a waiting list to join, should send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the Official Editor, Marc Schirmeister, 1555 Vista Lane, Pasadena, California 91103.

One *Rowrbrazzle* member is Jim Groat, a Tucson cartoonist who publishes *Equine the Uncivilized* under his own Graphxpress imprint. Groat has also recently launched *Morphs*, a black and white funny-animal comic devoted to short stories by young amateurs. Most of the *Morphs* authors have been *Rowrbrazzle* members so far, but this is only because *Morphs* has been best-publicized in *'Brazzle* to date. *Morphs* is intended as a public service to aspiring funny-animal artists everywhere.

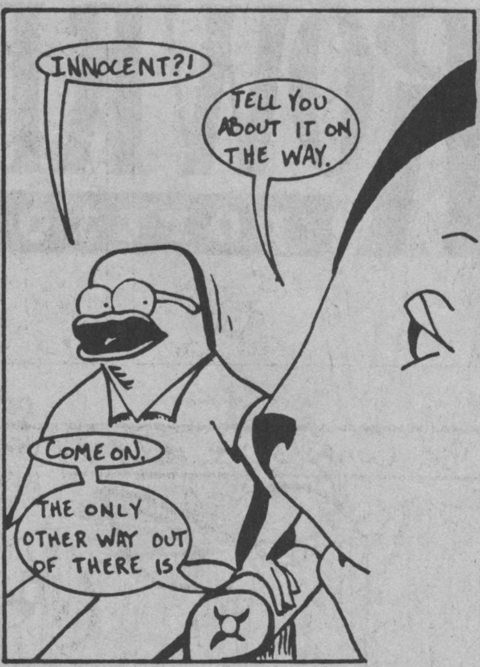
There are a lot of bad black and white comics currently being published, and *Morphs* is one of them. This is partly by intention. The goal of *Morphs* is not to improve its own quality, but to give fan artists an opportunity to pick up some professional experience. To quote from Groat's editorial in the first issue (April 1987), "We at Graphxpress will be bringing new talent to you on a continuous basis, giving exposure to artists deserving and waiting for their 'big break.'. . . If things go well enough . . . some of these works just might end up in books of their own." This will leave room in *Morphs* for still newer amateurs who are looking for a place to try out their talents.

Submissions of stories (please send photocopies only, not original art) and requests for information should be sent with a self-addressed stamped envelope to: *Morphs* Submissions, P.O. Box 32292, Tucson, Arizona 85751.

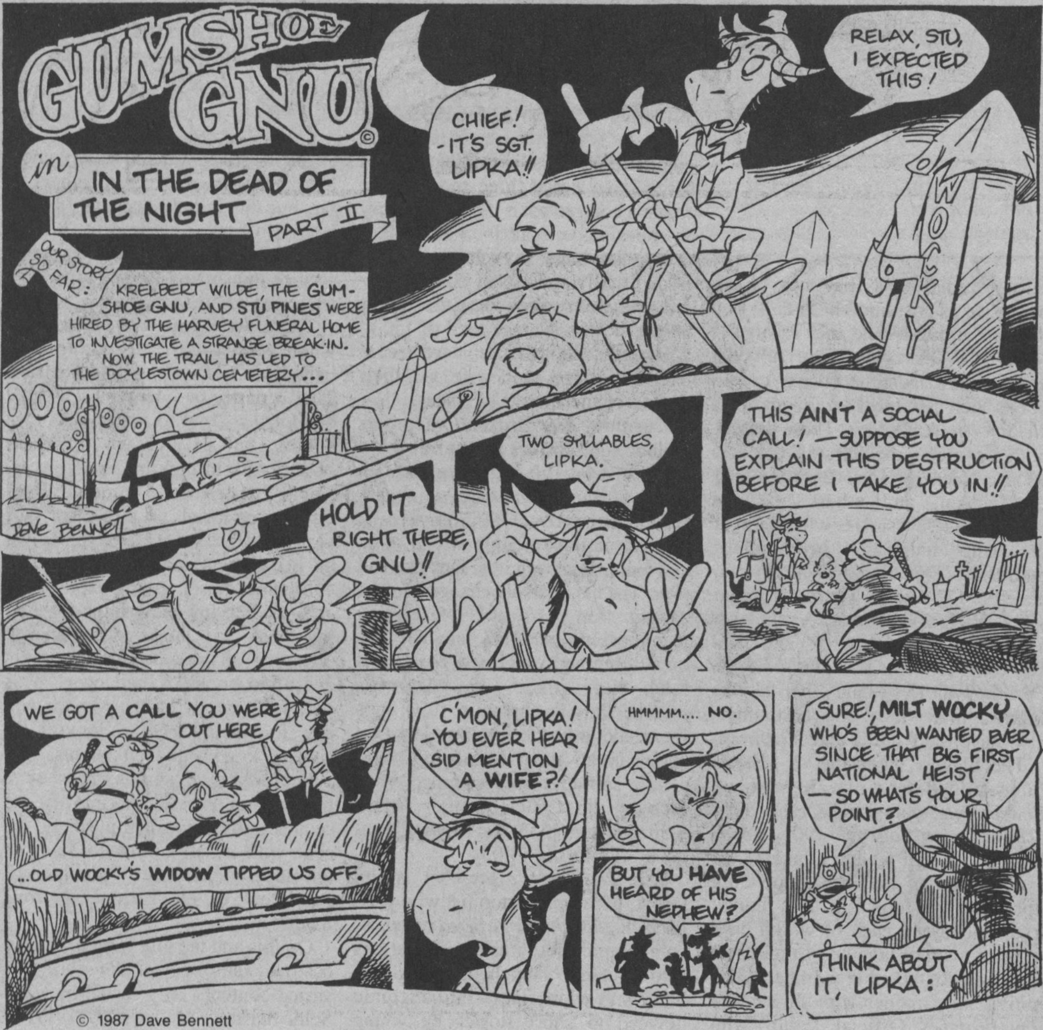
On this and the following pages, we offer a sampling of *Rowrbrazzle*'s varied contents, as selected by Marc Schirmeister. *—FRED PATTEN*


SPECIAL- FOR ROWRBRAZZLE ONLY! THE AMAZING TOM BRIESON-
MAXI MOUSE
"THE GREAT CHEESE Raid of 2042"
Robert Haynie

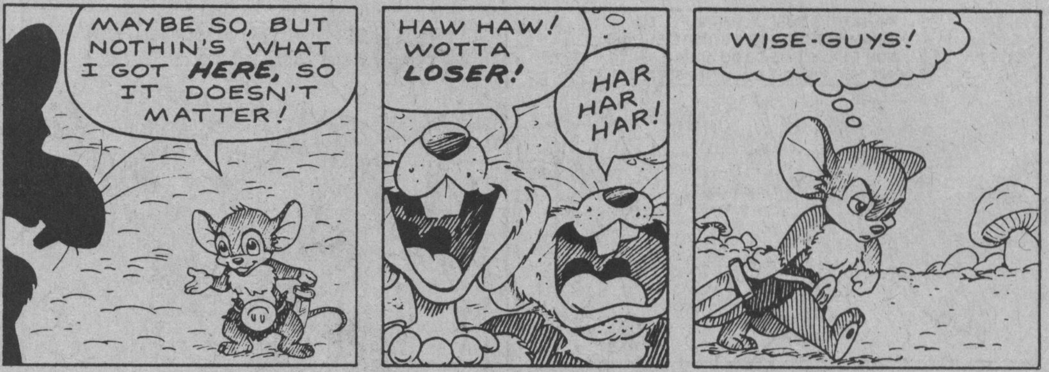
© 1987 Robert Haynie


INNOCENT?!
TELL YOU ABOUT IT ON THE WAY.
COME ON.
THE ONLY OTHER WAY OUT OF THERE IS

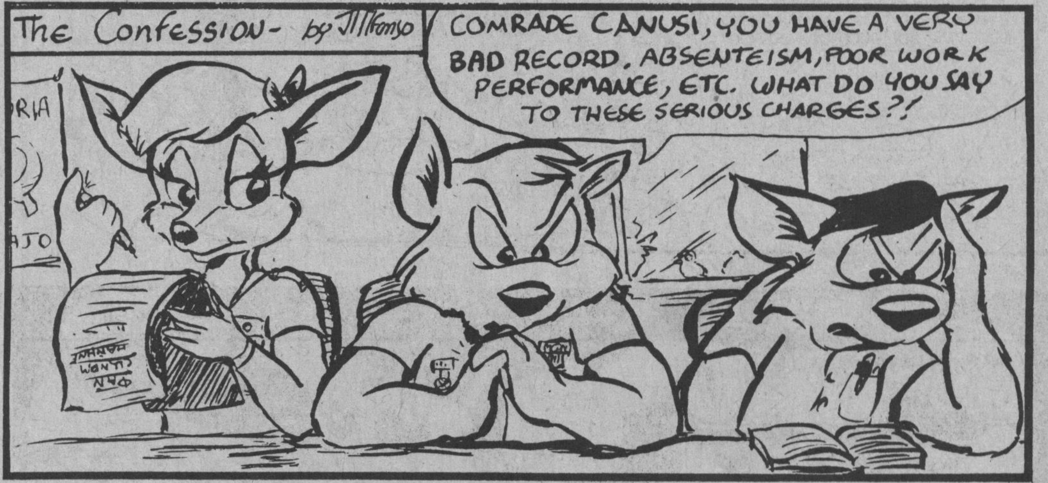
© 1987 Edd Vick


GUMSHOE GNU©
in IN THE DEAD OF THE NIGHT PART II
OUR STORY SO FAR: KRELBERT WILDE, THE GUMSHOE GNU, AND STU PINES WERE HIRED BY THE HARVEY FUNERAL HOME TO INVESTIGATE A STRANGE BREAK-IN. NOW THE TRAIL HAS LED TO THE DOYLESTOWN CEMETERY...
CHIEF! -IT'S SGT. LIPKA!!
RELAX, STU, I EXPECTED THIS!
WOCKY
OOOOOOO
DENE BENNETT
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, GNU!!
TWO SYLLABLES, LIPKA.
THIS AIN'T A SOCIAL CALL! —SUPPOSE YOU EXPLAIN THIS DESTRUCTION BEFORE I TAKE YOU IN!!
WE GOT A CALL YOU WERE OUT HERE
...OLD WOCKY'S WIDOW TIPPED US OFF.
C'MON, LIPKA! -YOU EVER HEAR SID MENTION A WIFE?!
HMMMM.... NO.
BUT YOU HAVE HEARD OF HIS NEPHEW?
SURE! MILT WOCKY, WHO'S BEEN WANTED EVER SINCE THAT BIG FIRST NATIONAL HEIST! —SO WHAT'S YOUR POINT?
THINK ABOUT IT, LIPKA:

© 1987 Dave Bennett

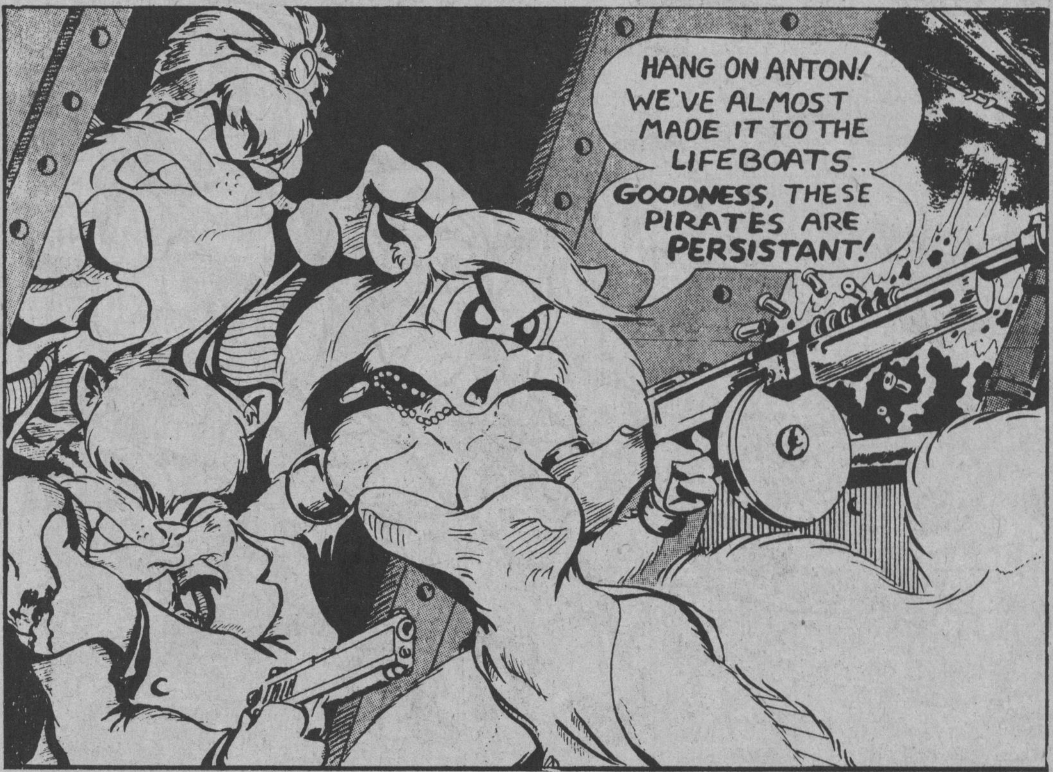

MAYBE SO, BUT NOTHIN'S WHAT I GOT **HERE,** SO IT DOESN'T MATTER!
HAW HAW! WOTTA **LOSER!**
HAR HAR HAR!
WISE-GUYS!

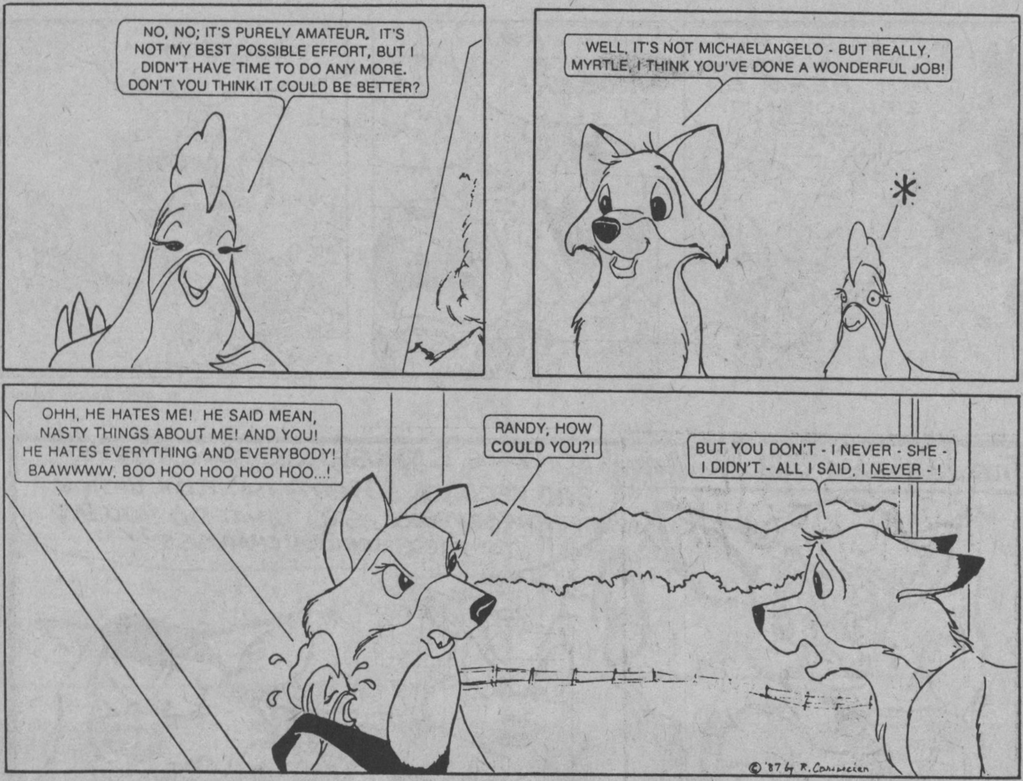
© 1987 Wendel Washer


The Confession- by JAlfonso
COMRADE CANUSI, YOU HAVE A VERY BAD RECORD. ABSENTEISM, POOR WORK PERFORMANCE, ETC. WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THESE SERIOUS CHARGES?!
ORIA
AJO

© 1987 Juan Alfonso

© 1987 John Speidel


HANG ON ANTON! WE'VE ALMOST MADE IT TO THE LIFEBOATS.. **GOODNESS,** THESE PIRATES ARE **PERSISTANT!**


NO, NO; IT'S PURELY AMATEUR. IT'S NOT MY BEST POSSIBLE EFFORT, BUT I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO DO ANY MORE. DON'T YOU THINK IT COULD BE BETTER?
WELL, IT'S NOT MICHAELANGELO - BUT REALLY, MYRTLE, I THINK YOU'VE DONE A WONDERFUL JOB!
*
OHH, HE HATES ME! HE SAID MEAN, NASTY THINGS ABOUT ME! AND YOU! HE HATES EVERYTHING AND EVERYBODY! BAAWWWW, BOO HOO HOO HOO HOO...!
RANDY, HOW **COULD** YOU?!
BUT YOU DON'T - I NEVER - SHE - I DIDN'T - ALL I SAID, I NEVER - !
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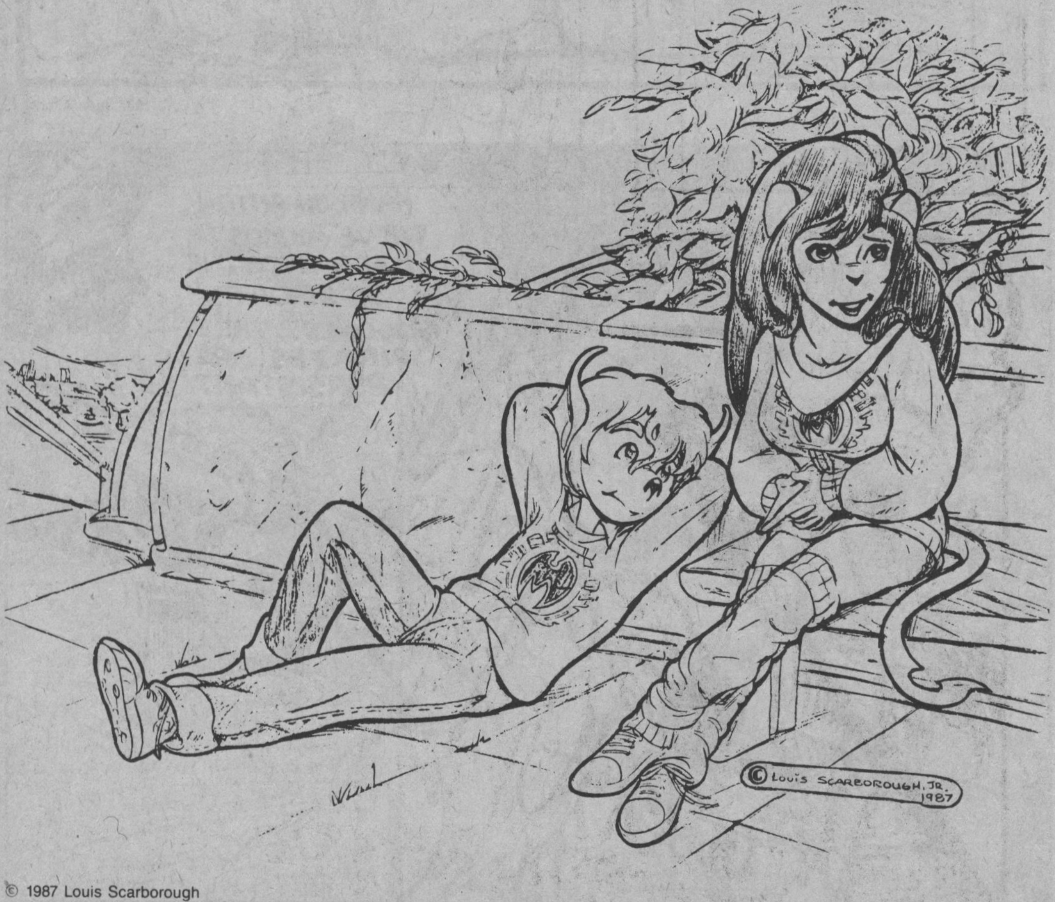
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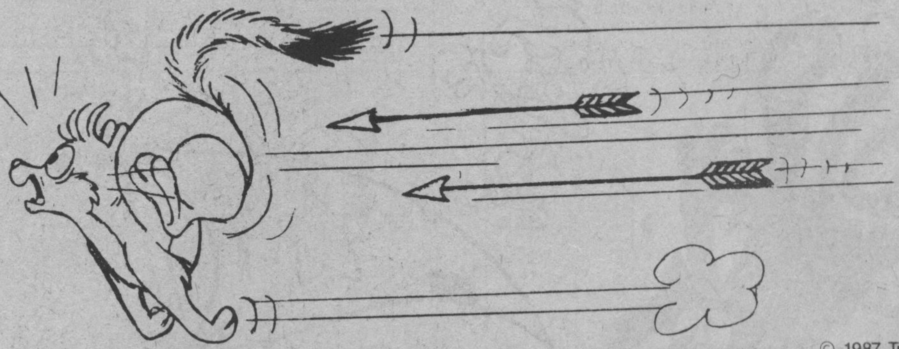

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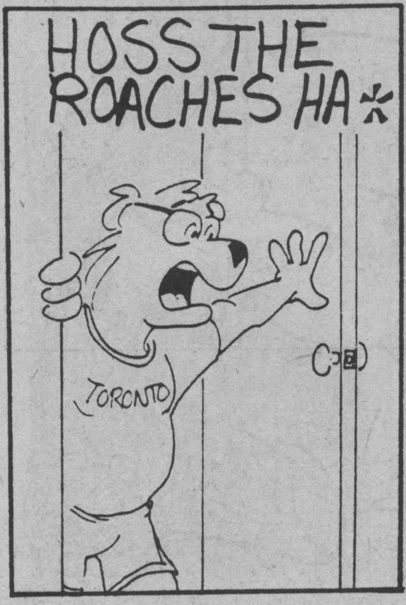
HOSS THE
ROACHES HA*
TORONTO

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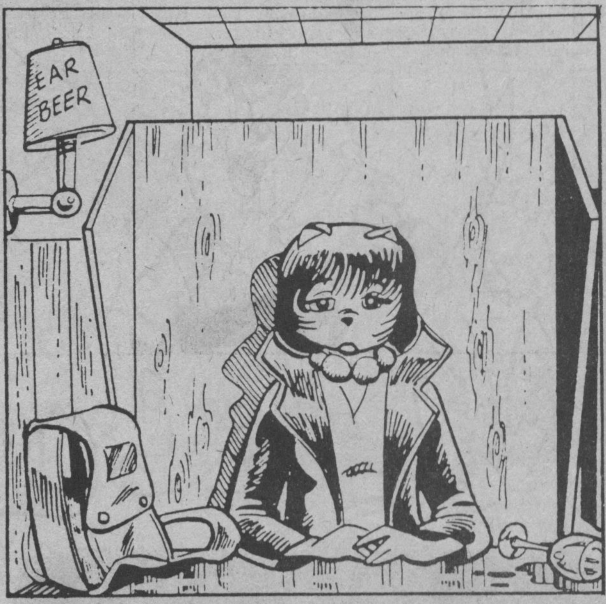

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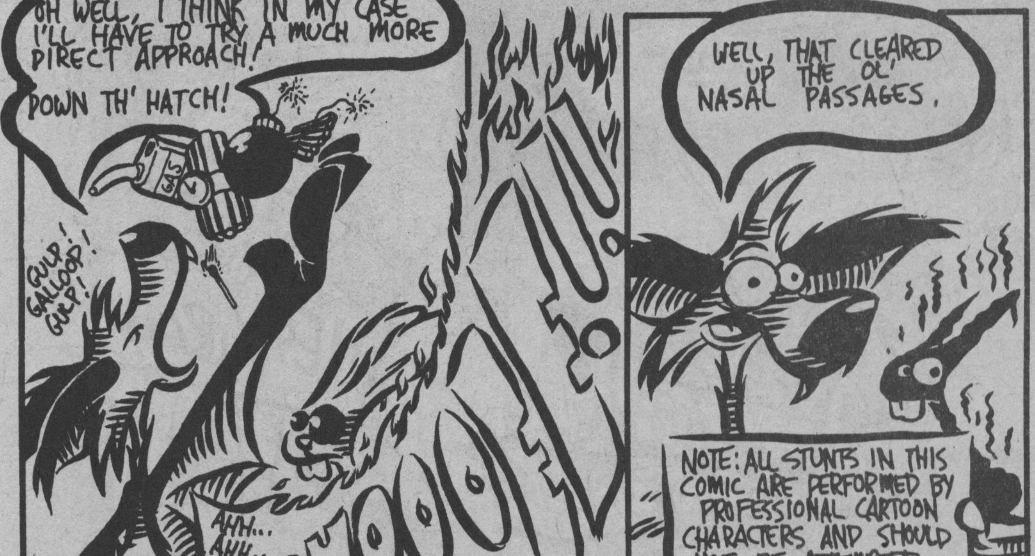
OH WELL, I THINK IN MY CASE I'LL HAVE TO TRY A MUCH MORE DIRECT APPROACH! DOWN TH' HATCH!
GAS
GULP! GALLOOP! GULP!
AHH... AHH.. AHH-CHOOO!
WELL, THAT CLEARED UP THE OL' NASAL PASSAGES.
NOTE: ALL STUNTS IN THIS COMIC ARE PERFORMED BY PROFESSIONAL CARTOON CHARACTERS AND SHOULD NOT BE ATTEMPTED AT HOME ~ The Management

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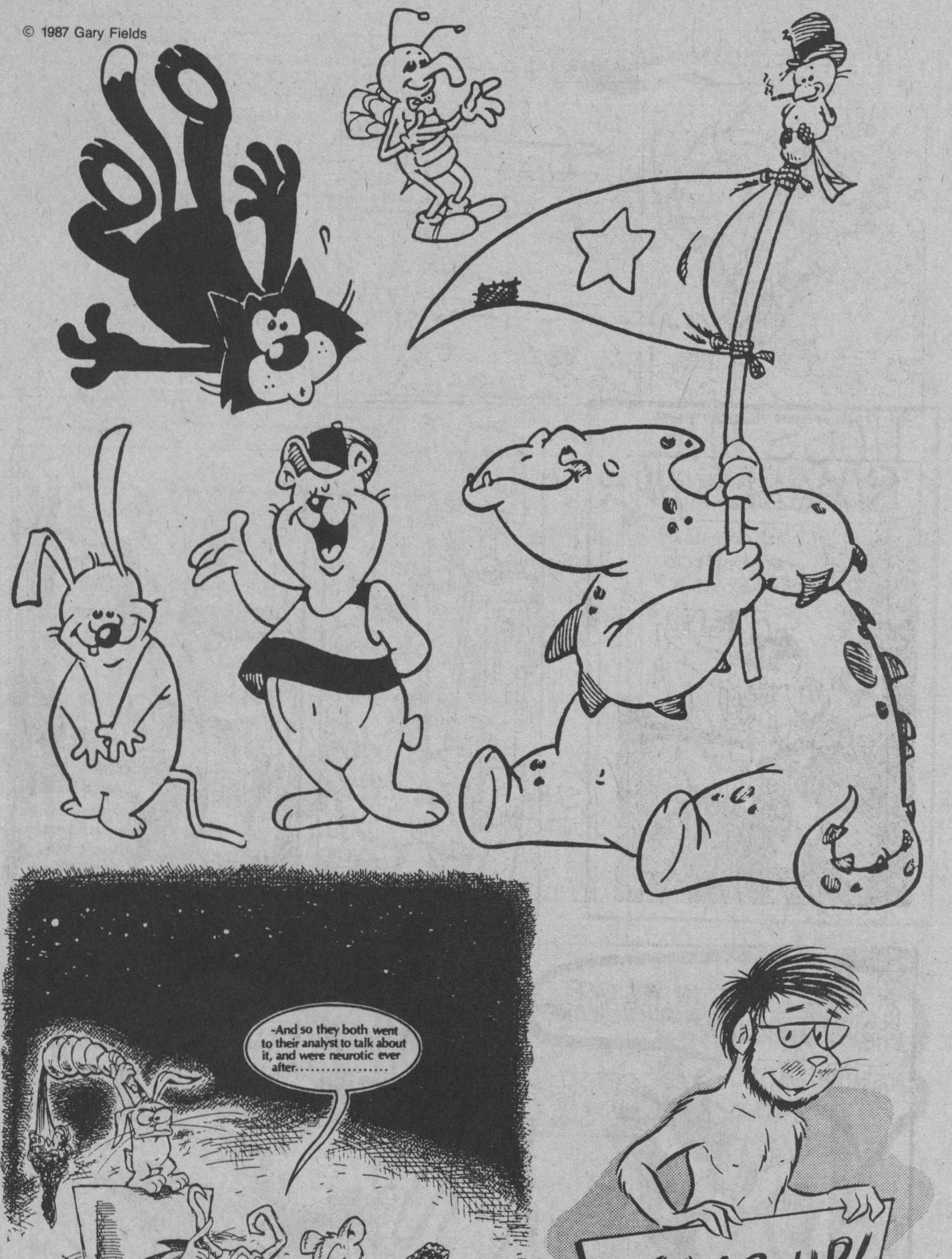
-And so they both went to their analyst to talk about it, and were neurotic ever after.................
Mike Kazaleh '84
HEY, GROUP!

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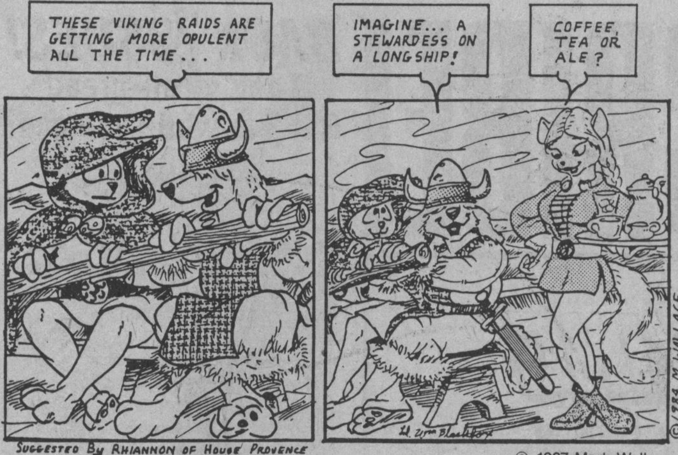
THESE VIKING RAIDS ARE GETTING MORE OPULENT ALL THE TIME...
IMAGINE... A STEWARDESS ON A LONGSHIP!
COFFEE, TEA OR ALE?
©1984 M. WALLACE
SUGGESTED BY RHIANNON OF HOUSE PROVENCE

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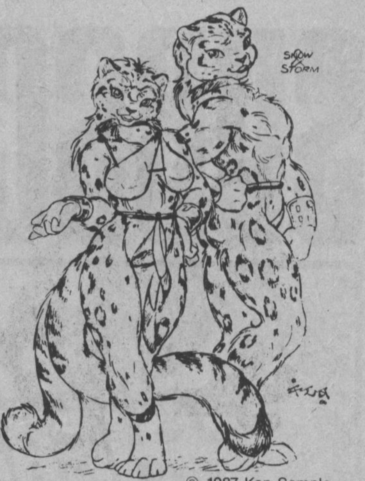

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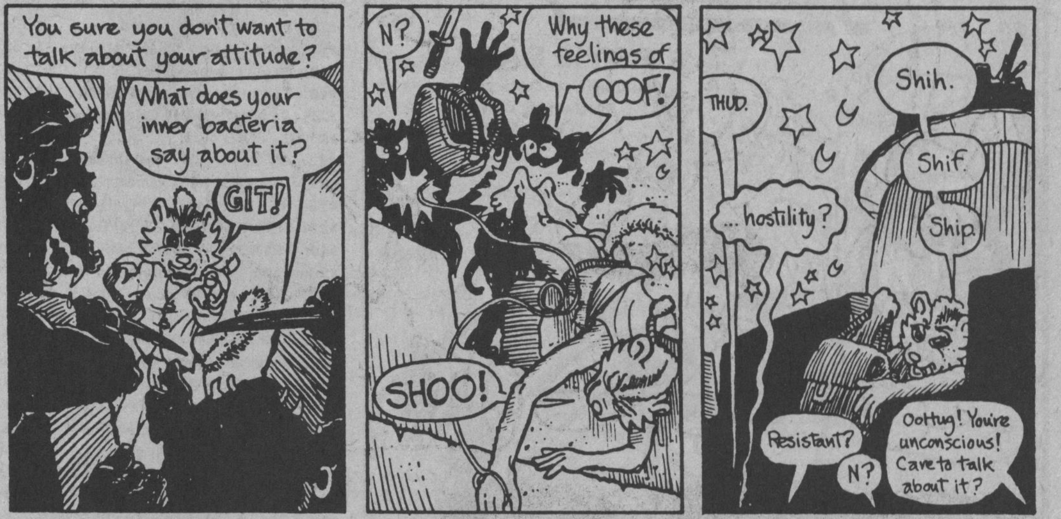
You sure you don't want to talk about your attitude?
What does your inner bacteria say about it?
GIT!
N?
Why these feelings of
OOOF!
SHOO!
THUD.
...hostility?
Shih.
Shif.
Ship.
Resistant?
N?
Oottug! You're unconscious! Care to talk about it?

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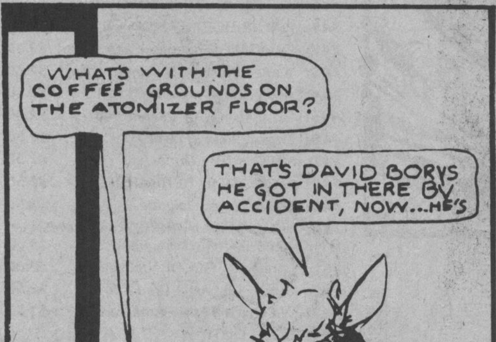
WHAT'S WITH THE COFFEE GROUNDS ON THE ATOMIZER FLOOR?
THAT'S DAVID BORYS HE GOT IN THERE BY ACCIDENT, NOW...HE'S
HI DOC.

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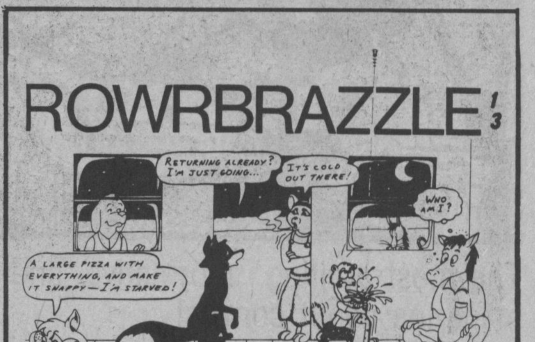
ROWRBRAZZLE! 1/3
RETURNING ALREADY? I'M JUST GOING...
IT'S COLD OUT THERE!
WHO AM I?
A LARGE PIZZA WITH EVERYTHING, AND MAKE IT SNAPPY—I'M STARVED!
I CAN'T SEE A THING WITH THESE ON!

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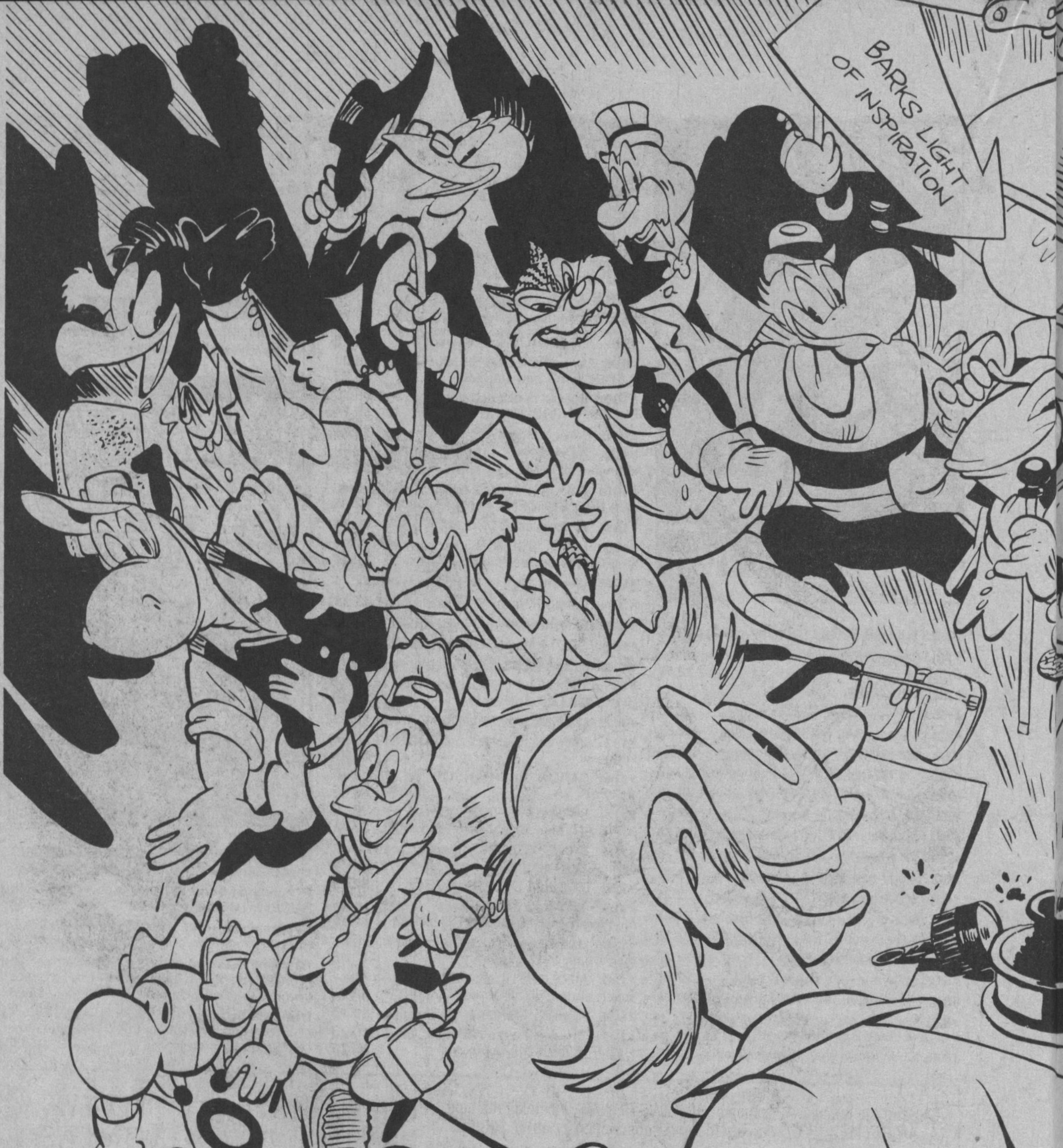


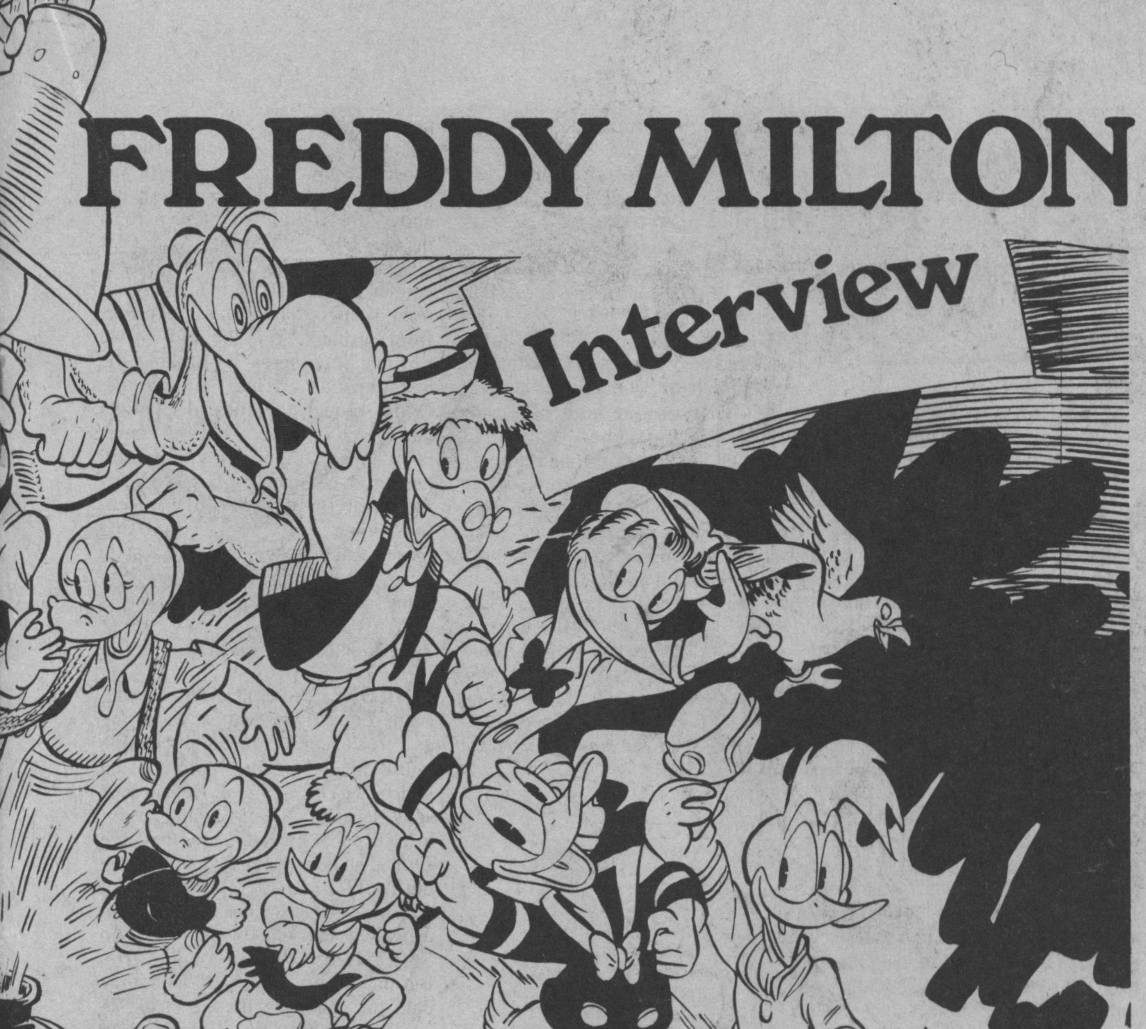
by Geoffrey Blum & Kim Thompson

While anthropomorphic comics—including the seemingly immortal Disney line—died a lingering death in the U.S. during the '70s, they thrived in Europe. In fact, they thrived to such an extent that European publishers had to commission new licensed work from local artists to keep up with the immense demand. Thus, while American funny-animal cartoonists had virtually nowhere to go in the comics field, dozens of Europan cartoonists were paying their rent with page after page of ducks, geese, and woodpeckers.

Freddy Milton, a Barks fan from his earliest days, was thus able to honor the master with a stream of skillfully realized Donald Duck and Woody Woodpecker stories. But his ambitions have always extended beyond occupying the top rung of the Disney and Lantz franchises—and thus, during his 15-year career, he's kept up a major workload on other fronts. In addition to working as a translator (credits: Prince Valiant, Valerian, Doonesbury, *and* Gomer Goof, *among many others) the 39-year-old Dane's comics*

FREDDY MILTON

Interview

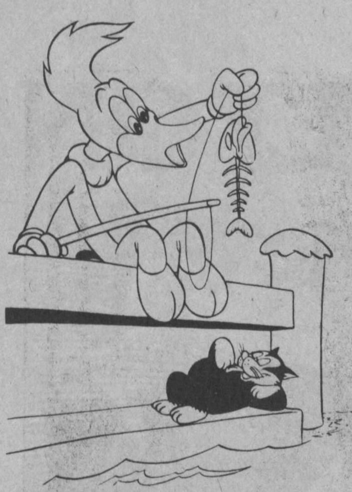


resume includes close to a thousand pages of work in a variety of genres, of which more than half comprise his "Gnuff" saga.

This interview is based on a written series of questions-and-answers between Gladstone editor Geoffrey Blum and Freddy. I asked Freddy an extra half-dozen questions, translated the new answers (in deference to his Gladstone editors, Freddy had written his first batch of responses in English). The results are what follows.

Another note: The spread on this page (based on an original layout by Daan Jippes) was originally slated to be the wraparound cover for this issue. While Woody Woodpecker's copyright holders were willing to let us use the character on the cover, we ran into a stone wall with the Disney folks. Resisting a temptation to run the cover with "censored" blocks over the Disney faces (Freddy's suggestion, and a funny one), we've chosen to publish it here (Disney is more lenient with running interior illustrations of their characters)—and Steve Gallacci helpfully stepped in on a short deadline and producing the eye-catching piece that fronts this issue as it stands.

—Kim Thompson



AMAZING HEROES: *Where were you born and where did you grow up?*

FREDDY MILTON: I was born on April 1948 in Viborg, Jutland, Denmark, where I spent my childhood and youth. I attended grammar school and high school there and got my degree as a public school teacher in the neighboring town Skive.

AH: *When did you start drawing your own comics?*

MILTON: Like most adolescents, I was very critical toward my own drawing for a period, but I guess I turned to comics making when I was about 17 and by the age of 20 I made up my mind to try seriously to make a career out of it—but not with funny-animals from the start. I drew realistically, or semi-realistically until I met with Daan [Jippes] in 1975. Later I have used realistically drawn characters, but the public prefers my funny-animal style.

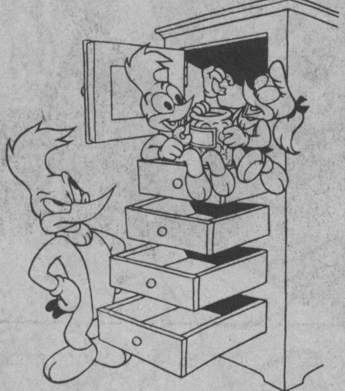
AH: *Did you or your parents originally plan a different career for yourself? And did you attend an art school?*

MILTON: No, my parents believed that my only brother Ingo and I should be free to choose our careers. While Ingo attended an art school, I never did. I guess a kind of urge toward "security" made me attend a construction school for a year when I was 20, but that mistake was rapidly put behind me. At least the education as a public school teacher had something to do with kids. But as I said, I never got to use it. In the run for the degree I of course specialized in art, and there I got the highest grades.

AH: *At what point did you become aware of Barks's stories and art as being different or better than other Disney comics?*

MILTON: When I read the issue that featured the waterhose-concertina gag cover, with the cabbage-growing/giant kite-flying disaster story[1]. From the start I had a weakness for the epic scale. Later I went through a period of fondness for the Paul Murry adventure stories with Mickey Mouse—especially his railroad stories, which led me to construct a model train in the cellar with all the facilities of his stories designed to be just as "cartoony" as in his Mickey train stories—all the way down to the bulging red and purple caps! Also, I had a genuine fondness for the Carl Buettner Li'l Bad Wolf stories.

AH: *How did you start up your fanzine* Carl Barks & Co.*?*



MILTON: *Carl Barks & Co.* was inspired by my reading the article "Vacation in Duckburg" in the early issues of *Funnyworld*, plus an article by Malcolm Willitz and Don and Maggie Thompson. Also, I was in contact with Glenn Bray and Thomas Gibson. I ruthlessly stole the Barks Index wherever I first saw it and printed the corresponding Scandinavian version alongside some articles. It became an instant hit, as there was the same kind of interest in knowing about "the good artist" over here as in the USA. A former editor at Gutenberghus [the Danish Disney comics publisher], Curt Smed, even used it in ordering missing proofs from Burbank, so in the mid-'70s we saw late "premieres" of Barks in the Scandinavian Disney magazines. Oddly enough they now display his name even on covers, but the names of other artists and writers are still hush-hush at Gutenberghus. An internal memo from Disneys to all licensees some years back stated that Disney was no longer against crediting artists, so Gutenberghus is now carrying out that policy purely on its own.

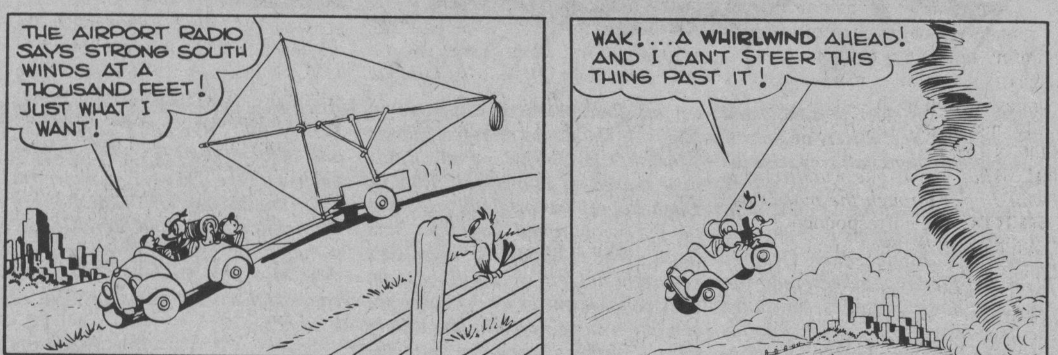
AH: *How did you enter the field of comic books?*

MILTON: I had contacted a Swede, Janne Lundstrom, who was working as a freelancer for the big publishing house Semic in Stockholm, doing scripts for *The Phantom*. He had seen some samples of *Zenit*, a daily adventure strip that I had done for the large Jutlandish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* during 1972 and 1973. It was a point of some pride to me that the paper had cancelled the Goodwin-Williamson *Secret Agent Corrigan* for my strip. But then again, I got only what they paid the syndicate for the strip: 25 danish crowns. It was only about an hour's pay back then, and I could barely draw two strips a day, since I was using the same large scale as Alex Raymond did on his early *Rip Kirby*!

Anyway, through Janne I got an open invitation from the management to come up to their publishing house and work in their studio, which I then did from 1974 to 1976. The job, however, merely consisted in rearranging and retouching newspaper strips that were being recycled in comic books.

I did do some material of my own, though: a Sherlock Holmes spoof drawn in a humorous style, openly inspired by the style in an album I had

From *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* #68: the first classic Barks story Freddy Milton remembers.


THE AIRPORT RADIO SAYS STRONG SOUTH WINDS AT A THOUSAND FEET! JUST WHAT I WANT!
WAK! ...A WHIRLWIND AHEAD! AND I CAN'T STEER THIS THING PAST IT!

gotten ahold of and was deeply taken by at the time: *Tea For Two*, drawn by one Daan Jippes, whom I eagerly tried to contact with a couple of fan-letters. He responded kindly to them, and it led to our first meeting in Stockholm in 1975. He was up there on holiday with his Swedish girlfriend, and we met at the most colorful place one could think of in Stockholm: *"Wasavarvet"*—the dock with the exhibition of one of the best-preserved 16th century vessels.

At that time, Daan was already working as a freelance art director for the Oberon publishing house, especially for *Donald Duck*. As I had always had this fondness for Disney animation and Barks storytelling, we had much to talk about, and my interest in switching back to funny animals grew.

From 1976 to 1982 we did 18 stories together. I'd do the first draft of the story and rough out the art, which was then altered and added to and improved by Daan, at which point it went back to me for inking. Exceptions to this include the first four stories, of which Ben Verhagen inked three. The fourth, "A Clean Case of Competence" [*Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* #515] was done at a holiday session in Viborg where Daan and I worked closely together.

Around 1980 I moved to Copenhagen, and aside from my licensed production with the ducks I had jobs at the local Danish Semic Press translating and relettering French comics albums, for which there was a growing market. I also did a couple of albums with Woody Woodpecker for them, and later in 1981 picked up the production of more Woody stories for the monthly *Woody Woodpecker* comics, to which I contributed regularly, alternating Woody stories and "Gnuff" stories up until the end of 1985. That magazine was co-produced [in order to cut costs] in a Swedish, a Norwegian, a Danish, and a Dutch edition. Despite that, the budget could not sustain the added home production. Sales were dropping, and now only the Norwegian version has survived, and purely on a reprint basis.

The "Gnuff" series has continued as a series of full-color albums as well as running Sunday-page format (incorporating one and a half comic-book pages) in *Kilroy*, a newly founded comics section to the largest Danish daily newspaper, *Ekstra-Bladet*, as well as *Critters*.

AH: *What was it like working with Daan Jippes through the mail?*

MILTON: The correspondence with Daan has always been great fun. We exchange ideas and opinions and gossip, as much as commenting on the actual work we have had going between us. I have learned enormously from Daan, as much as I have from Barks. His whole process of "polishing" things as he does to perfection—although I will never match *his* exuberance.

Freddy next to an authentic "Orva" graffito, which inspired a whole "Gnuff" tale.

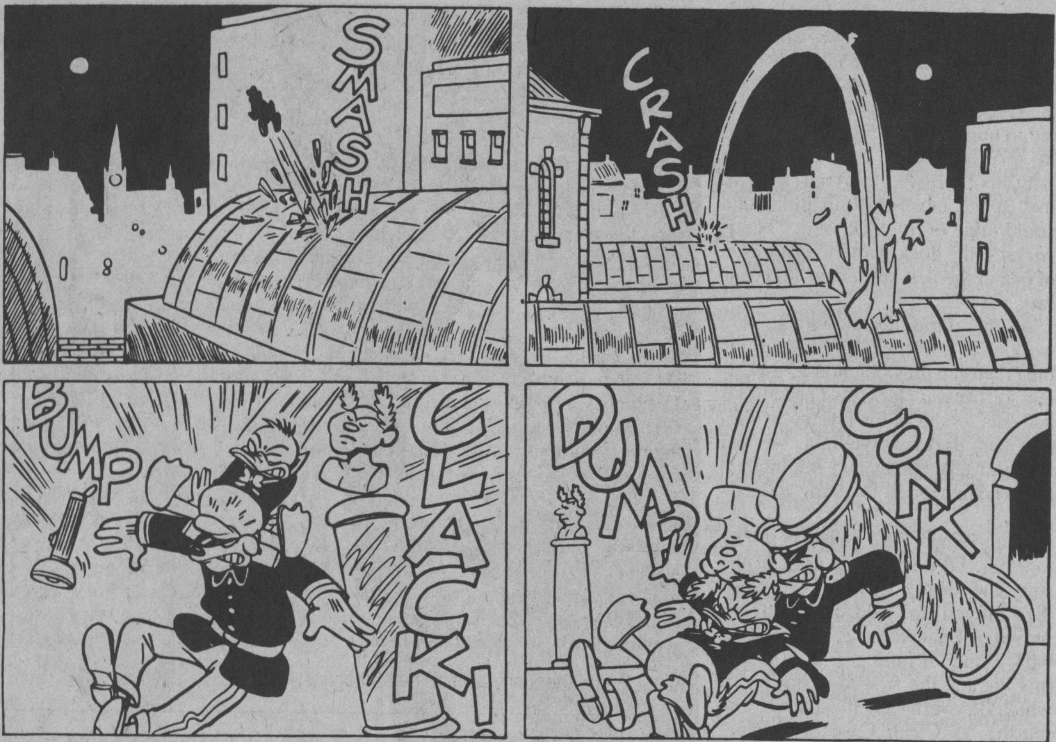
After Daan's move to the USA I continued writing and drawing duck stories for Oberon for three years (nine stories) until 1986. By then Oberon had put together a more regular production team, dividing scripting and illustration, and I ended up in the illustration department.

AH: *In the case of, for example, "The Artful Dodgers" [*Walt Disney's Comics and Stories *#521], in what form did it come to you from Oberon?*

MILTON: The scripts, in this case written by Jan Kruse, are presented as visual breakdowns, which I elaborate on. I also make some changes. On "Artful Dodgers" I had Donald being blown through the roof and back into the museum again by the cannon. I also re-used my old villains Joris and Kloris (whom I'd used earlier in "The Rewarding Formula" and "The Right Man in the Wrong Place") as burglars, rather than the usual Beagle Boys as suggested by the script. An exception to this was "Adventure Holidays." That was an old script lying around from the days of Volker Reiche.

AH: *Have you ever worked directly for Gutenberghus, or only through Oberon?*

MILTON: For a very brief period in the early '70s I did three to five short duck stories for Gutenberghus, but I regard them as not up to par, so I prefer to let them be forgotten. Working for Oberon you are allowed to work as much as you want (or as little —though they would like more now). With Gutenberghus, aside from the silly anonymity, I would have to do a fixed number of pages allowing me to do nothing else—to become a company man. Very soon I would be tired out, worn out—and thus end up doing dreary work. I need variation, so I can restore my various creative nerves by doing a different job. So I feel very much at ease doing things



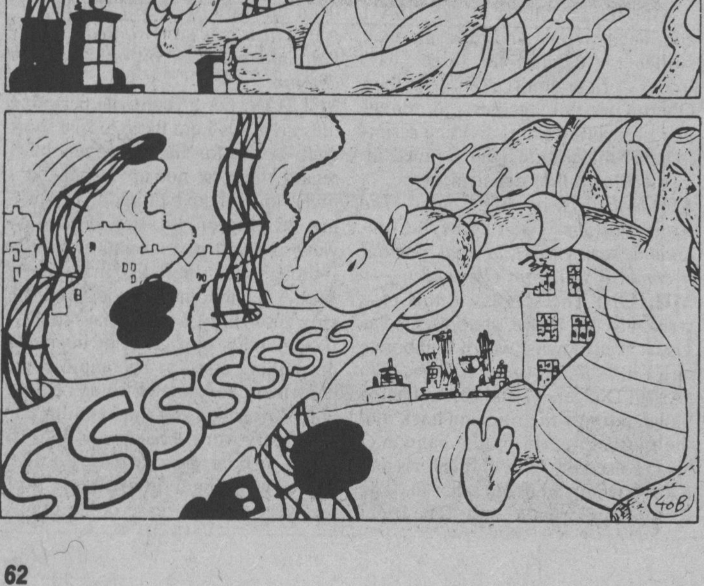
From a Donald Duck story, which Milton drew and contributed ideas to.

the way I do them now. I *would* like to illustrate my own duck stories, though, and maybe it can be arranged through Gladstone some day.

AH: *You once mentioned that you'd lived in the country for many years. When did you move into the city?*

MILTON: My girlfriend Bodil and I bought a house in Allerød, a small village 30 kilometers (20 miles) from Copenhagen in 1982. (Actually, I was at a convention in Rome by invitation of Luca Boschi when she saw the ad, and I barely made it home in time for us to sign up for it.) We married in 1984 and had a daughter, Ida, in May 1986. I have no car, but the local train is fast, so that it is only a half an hour to the studio in central Copenhagen, Gimle, that I share with ten other comics artists. Actually, it's the only professional cartoonists studio of its kind in Scandinavia. It was founded in 1981 and of course I was one of the founders. I usually spend half of my working days at Gimle, the other half at home. Things like scripting and translation work are better done when you're alone.

From "Gnuff," Gargantua the dragon, in a scene as yet unpublished in the U.S.



AH: *When did the Gnuffs start? Where were they first published?*

MILTON: From 1973 to 1978 I published a "zine" with comics by myself and other young Scandinavian artists, as well as stories by foreign artists—and I'm proud to say that it meant the first publication of stories by several artists who were later published more "officially" over here. The zine was called *Sejd* (old nordic word for wizard's brew—pronounced "side"); the 12th issue, from 1974, featured my first attempt at "Gnuff."

My very first "long" Gnuff story—two albums—lingered seven years at the publisher before it hit print last year. This was due to trouble in arranging co-printing, which would make the whole venture profitable. ("Profitable" is hardly the word—making ends meet is more like it!)

AH: *Dragons are an unusual choice*

for comic book heroes, yet you created the "Gnuff" family and also included a dragon in "The Big Sneeze." What made you think of using these creatures?

MILTON: Dragons are outcasts, a kind of minority. People look on them with scepticism: are they trustworthy? They are fearsome at times: they have scales and leathery wings, can even breathe fire (which I only used in the first story, however). They live for centuries (making it possible for me to do the "For the Love of Gnellie" story without worrying about the "time" factor). I'm planning on doing a story on Gnicky's 100th birthday someday—he has been 98 for *years* now!

My dragons openly depict the problems of minorities. They have to conceal their old culture (their wings) to make it in our society. Also, they are a species on the decline. These are the reasons why they appeal to *me*.

AH: *How did you and Fantagraphics get together?*

MILTON: On a trip to Europe a number of years ago Kim Thompson and Dwight Decker visited Gimle. At that time I was already working on "Gnuff" and was contributing to the Scandinavian *Woody Woodpecker* comics with both Woody and Gnuff stories. Later on, when Kim was planning out *Critters*, he contacted me.

AH: *Are there differences between your approach to Gnuff and Woody Woodpecker?*

MILTON: "Woody" is, following American comic-book tradition, centered around one star character, with whom the reader identifies and through whom everything is perceived. The "Gnuff" series is designed to be wider and deals with a series of social mechanisms, of which the Gnuffs are not always the center. Besides, the reader is supposed to identify with the whole group, not just one person. In fact, the name of the series over here is "The Gnuff Family," indicating that the focus is not on one character, but on several.

AH: *You tried to weave together Gnuff's world and Woody's world, didn't you?*

MILTON: At one point I was alternating between Gnuff stories and Woody stories, doing one of each every month. So it was tempting to maintain a common theme during a period. When you read the serial currently appearing in *Critters*, the one that begins with "The Living Past" in #19, there actually exists an equally long (46 pages), parallel Woody continuity, with Woody playing a "Jack and the Beanstalk" role. One of the giant trees grows up under Woody's house and shoves it up into the air—a literal tree-house. I thought this was very appropriate for a woodpecker, since they actually do live in trees—but Woody didn't enjoy it at all.

In the Woody series, I've cast Wally Walrus as mayor. On page 6 of the second chapter of the upcoming "Gnuff" continuity, "Gnicky Superstar," we actually see, at the bottom of the page, Wally (drawn in silhouette) in conversation with [regular "Gnuff" supporting character] City Council Chairman Siegel. Similarly, Siegel has appeared in the Woody series, and not just as a silhouette! Moreover, I drew several of my own characters into the Woody series; Hans Vig—or, as Dwight Decker has dubbed him in English, J. Phineas Phrogg—debuted in my first Woody album, *The Blot*, whose theme is reminiscent of *E.T.*—but I was years (if not light years) ahead of *E.T.*!

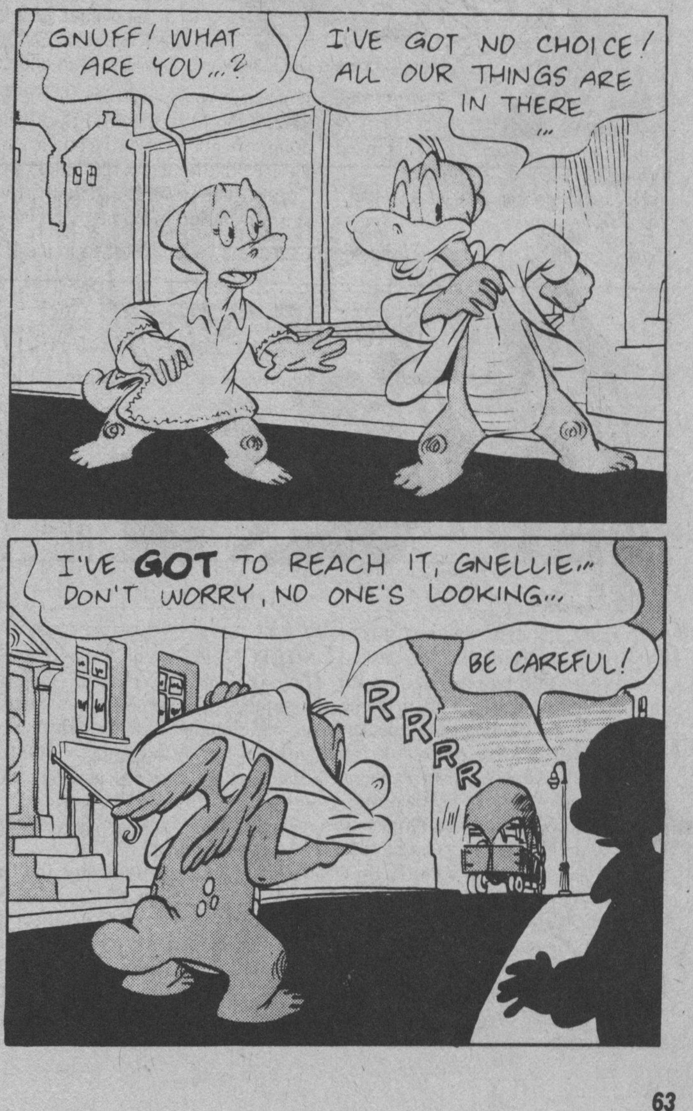
AH: *Wouldn't it be interesting to see your Woody stories appearing in the U.S. at the same time as "Gnuff," if they're complementary?*

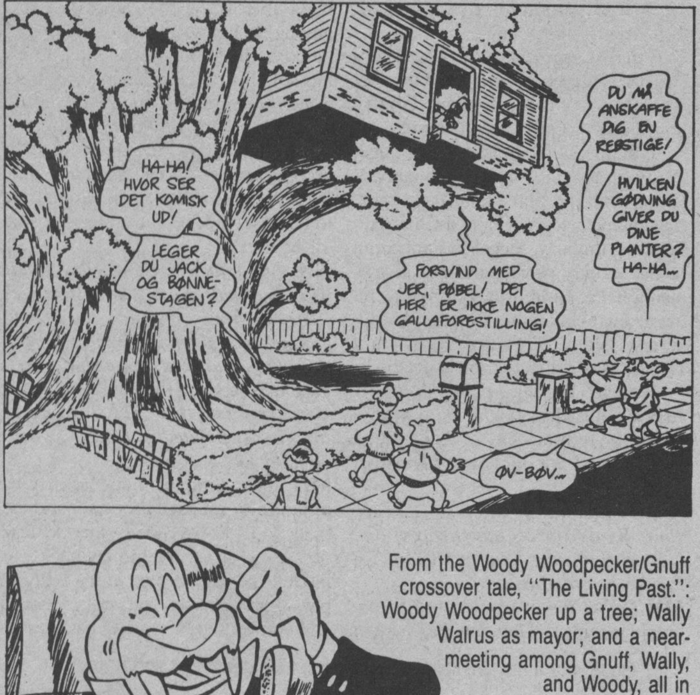
MILTON: Yes, it would, and Fantagraphics thinks so too, but they haven't been able to dig the rights out from among the contractual package. It may be complicated by the fact that Lantz has sold his rights to a large conglomerate (Universal), which isn't particularly interested in Woody *per se*. On top of that, the matter may be further complicated by the fact that I also have certain rights to the work which have to be observed, because I haven't sold all of them.

AH: *I assume this rights situation is what enabled you to take a story like "The Big Sneeze," which you originally did as a duck story, then redrew to feature your own goose characters, then redrew as a Woody Woodpecker story. How is it that "The Big Sneeze" was finally printed in Holland—as a Donald Duck album?*

MILTON: Simple: they had it lying around. By mistake they had paid me twice for a 10-page duck story. Instead of asking me for the money back—or having me do the next story without pay—they printed that story instead and considered the earlier payment to

Gnuff: the funny-animal (here, dragons) as outcast and social misfit.


GNUFF! WHAT ARE YOU...?
I'VE GOT NO CHOICE! ALL OUR THINGS ARE IN THERE ...
I'VE GOT TO REACH IT, GNELLIE... DON'T WORRY, NO ONE'S LOOKING...
BE CAREFUL!
RRRRR


HA-HA! HVOR SER DET KOMISK UD!
LEGER DU JACK OG BØNNESTAGEN?
DU MÅ ANSKAFFE DIG EN REBSTIGE!
HVILKEN GØDNING GIVER DU DINE PLANTER? HA-HA...
FORSVIND MED JER, PØBEL! DET HER ER IKKE NOGEN GALLAFORESTILLING!
ØV-BØV...

From the Woody Woodpecker/Gnuff crossover tale, "The Living Past.": Woody Woodpecker up a tree; Wally Walrus as mayor; and a near-meeting among Gnuff, Wally, and Woody, all in silhouette. Time for *Crisis on Milton Earths*?

cover that (although "Sneeze" was in fact 31 pages). In return I then asked *them* not to let it be reprinted again, and later managed to haul in some money on the Woody Woodpecker version—which I'd expanded to 46 pages. This version also explains something about one of my own characters, the aforementioned Phineas J. Phrogg—and features Gargantua, whom I later used in Gnuff. So I reworked it yet again, this time into a "Gnuff" story which should be appearing in *Critters* in the summer of 1988.

AH: *You certainly got a lot of mileage out of that one. How many Gnuff album-length stories are there—and Woody too, while we're at it?*

MILTON: Let's see. . . There are 11 albums' worth of "Gnuff" material completed. I'm working on a twelfth, and have numbers 13 through 15 written. As for Woody, there are five album-length stories, and a sixth album's worth of short stories.

AH: *In what order do the "Gnuff" stories take place?*

MILTON: Chronologically, the first story to appear in *Critters* [#2-5], "The Gnuffs Move In," is in fact the first. Then there's a two-part story, "Trouble on George Street"/"The Great Technocrack," which was actually the first to be completed and has appeared in Scandinavia as Gnuff albums 1 and 2. "Gnicky Superstar," which begins in this year's Christmas issue of *Critters*, is next, followed by "Gnuffs on Vacation" and the double-length "Battle for Picus Tower" (neither of which has been published in the U.S.). The next three, all of which have been serialized in *Critters*, are the one with the giant trees I mentioned earlier (which we haven't figured out an "umbrella" title for yet), then "Animal Graffiti" [*Critters* #7, 9-11], which is also Scandinavian Gnuff album 3, and "For the Love of Gnellie" [*Critters* #13, 15-16]—although, obviously, the "flashback" portions of this one take place well before anything else in the series!

AH: *That was certainly a unique story. How did you come up with the idea of setting it over a century ago?*

MILTON: "For the Love of Gnellie" (the version as it was printed) was actually done especially for the American market; it has yet to be scheduled over here. The script originally starred Grandma Duck, and was *her* love story from her youth—with the Ganders as the lucky counterparts.

AH: *Ah. . .the "lucky O'Gators."*

MILTON: Exactly. Gutenberghus approached me when they were conducting surveys on a possible album series with the ducks, and Grandma's love story was my suggestion—a series telling the past of the characters. The person that approached me was transferred to a different job in the firm, and when the project eventually surfaced, it had become the Scrooge adventure album series, with scripts by the manager of the German division Kabatek, and illustrations from a Spanish studio.

AH: *Thanks for straightening all that out. . .I think. What artists besides Barks have inspired you?*

MILTON: No one right now. But in the early stages I have been keen on Uderzo, Al Williamson, Jippes's caricatural style, and Franquin.

AH: *Do you think of yourself more as a writer or an artist, or are the two inseparable?*

MILTON: I always prefer doing as much as possible myself, avoiding any assembly-line methods. These methods tend to "level" everything. Try to imagine Barks's stories inked consistently by others. *Something* would be missing, right? Even Barks's *im*perfection in spots adds to his personality, artwise. Part of the Barks secret actually lies in his occasionally "casual" inking (modeling too, for that matter)—and imperfection cannot be successfully copied. I recall Daan and me dreaming up some odd perspectives in some panels, though we as artists *knew* better. But Barks would have done it simpler and with faults in perspective—so we just had to dream up some proper faults!

What I discovered during my duck scripting was that certain kinds of motivations worked in the Duckburg universe, while others didn't. Adding to that "established" format is of course the fact that new work is being combined with reprints. To kids [any evolution would] constitute a discrepancy because they experience all the stories *now*, including the old ones. So if the new ones differ too much from the old ones they would get confused—and the universe would become less convincing. With "Gnuff" I try to use some more satirical stories, aiming questions at "systems" in our current society.

What irritates me the most about the major Disney scripters these days is the fact that the writers are not aware enough of motivation. In my opinion there should always be a deeper, understandable *reason* for the ducks to do what they do—so that the things which happen as a consequence will have more of a dramatic impact, because you know and feel that in the course of action they are *inevitable*. That is, with the psychological background, things will logically and naturally follow a given line. Then you have both tragedy and comedy represented. Now, the vision usually has a comical tone, like the giant kite-flying story does. But that one also is a tragic story. Barks's best duck stories, in my opinion, are the ones that are both tragic and comical at the same time—where you are forced to relate to a common character flaw. That also adds to the moral value of the stories. The best funny-animal stories are the moral ones—following a direct line from the old fables by La Fontaine and others.

I'm a reckless moralist, as well as a sentimentalist, I guess. I always feel pity for Donald. He really can't help it—he *is* doing his best.

So you see, it annoys and saddens me to see a story with the barest excuse for motivation. Just lately I saw a Gutenberghus story: There was a Japanese exhibition in Duckburg. Just because of that, from one panel to the next, Donald developed an obsessive fancy for everything Japanese and went through a number of "funny" routines built around Japan gags. That's an insult to Donald and to the readers. The editors must think that as long as some funny things are going on the kids must be satisfied. Unfortunately, the kids can't formulate the alternative, but the editors should be able to do it. In stories of that kind, as I like to say, there might be a lot going on but nothing is really *happening*.

AH: *What are your preferences as far as coloring?*

MILTON: It depends on the quality of the printing. If it's bad, you're better off with robust mechanical colors. If the quality is high, however, laser-scanned coloring is preferable, because you can use an unlimited range of hues, as well as more pastel background colors with graduated tones, which I have in my Scandinavian Gnuff albums. I sent copies to Carl Barks, since I'd dedicated one of the albums to him, and his comment was that he was impressed with the quality of the coloring, and wished that his strips had received that kind of painstaking treatment when he was doing Donald Duck. When I lay a gray tone onto a black-and-white edition, it's to buttress the graphic aspect of a line original that is designed for color.

AH: *What are your ambitions for future projects?*

MILTON: These days I'm also doing book illustrations and advertising jobs from time to time to add to my income. Our national toy company LEGO is producing comics albums now, and I am on that venture myself.

AH: *Is there anything more you wish for?*

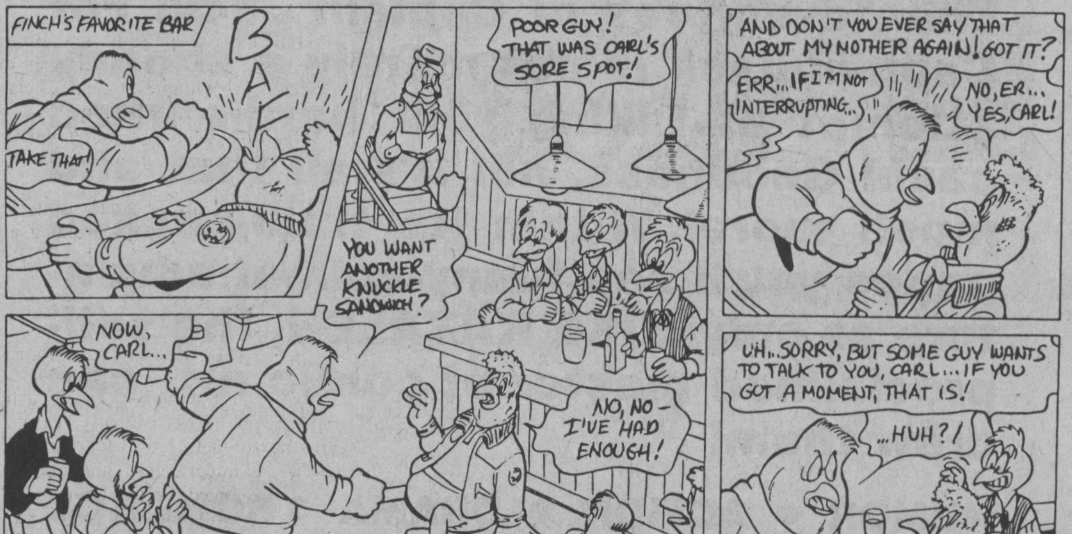
MILTON: In general, I have been very lucky in working out my ambitions and getting the opportunities and the response that I might wish for. I have had varied job offers, a happy family, good colleagues, fine correspondents, living in a relatively unpolluted area, good health, no running conflicts—I would be a heel to ask for *more*! If only things could continue the way they are right now. . . ●

MILTON FOOTNOTES

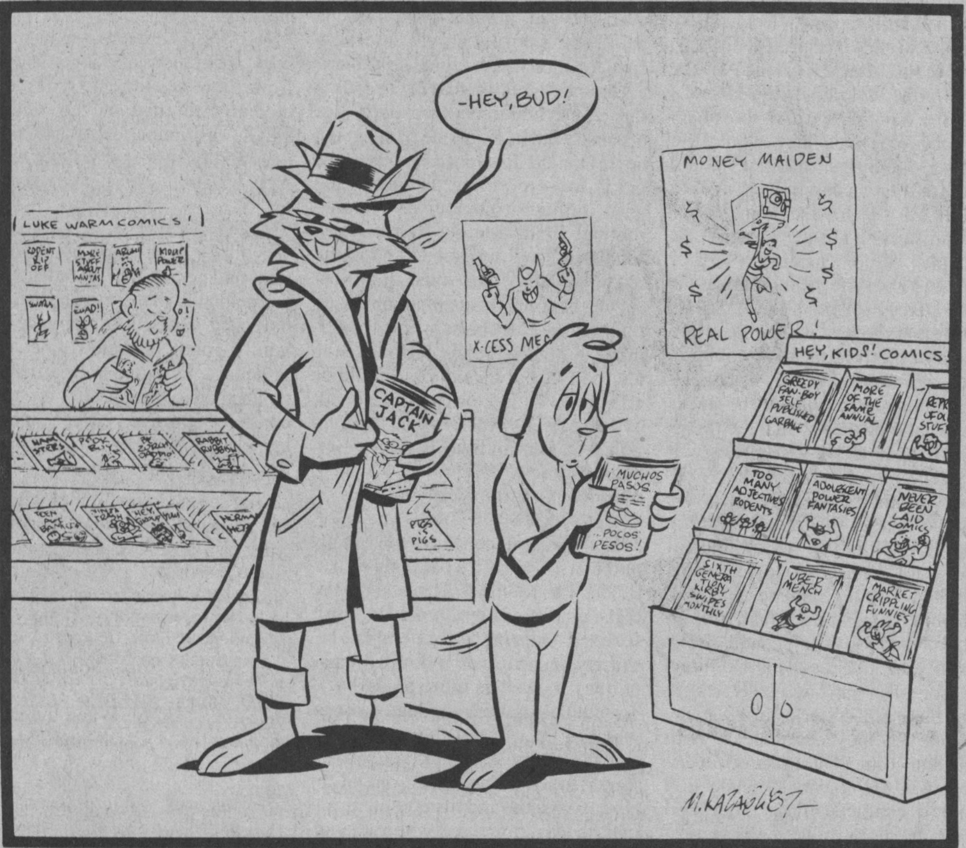
(1) Freddy is here referring to the 10-page story that appeared in Walt Disney's Comics and Stories *#68. The cover in question is from* Comics and Stories *#141. Cover and story were originally printed in Denmark in the March, 1953 issue of the Danish Disney comic* Anders And & Co, *when Freddy was just a month shy of five years old. —ED.*

(2) With the exception of "The Artful Dodgers," none of the Milton stories mentioned here have seen print in English (yet). —ED.

A Freddy Milton "private-duck" serial, so to speak: "Drake Mallard," which should eventually show up in *Critters*.


FINCH'S FAVORITE BAR
BAF
TAKE THAT!
POOR GUY! THAT WAS CARL'S SORE SPOT!
YOU WANT ANOTHER KNUCKLE SANDWICH?
AND DON'T YOU EVER SAY THAT ABOUT MY MOTHER AGAIN! GOT IT?
ERR... IF I'M NOT INTERRUPTING...
NO, ER... YES, CARL!
NOW, CARL...
NO, NO - I'VE HAD ENOUGH!
TAKE IT EASY, CARL!
UH.. SORRY, BUT SOME GUY WANTS TO TALK TO YOU, CARL... IF YOU GOT A MOMENT, THAT IS!
...HUH?!

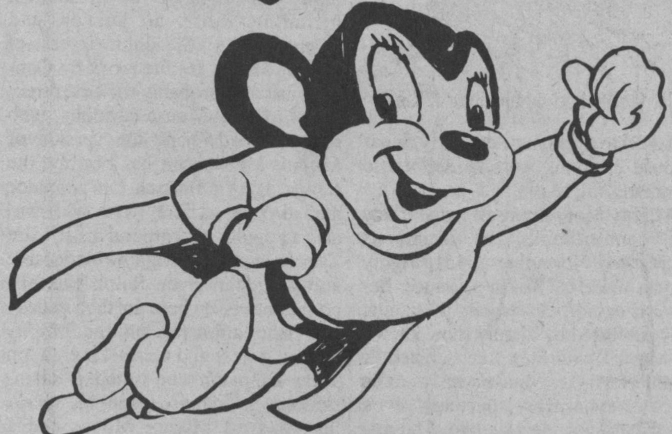
AT LAST! A comic you can TRUST!


-HEY, BUD!
LUKE WARM COMICS!
RODENT RIP OFF
MORE STUFF ABOUT NINJAS
KIDLIP POWER
EWAD!
HAMSTERS
PEOK BOY
RABBIT RUBBISH
TEEN
NINJA TRASH
HEY, GROUP
YUM
HERMAN
PIGS IS PIGS
CAPTAIN JACK
X-CESS MEC
MONEY MAIDEN
$
REAL POWER!
HEY, KIDS! COMICS!
GREEDY FAN-BOY SELF PUBLISHED GARBAGE
MORE OF THE SAME ANNUAL
TOO MANY ADJECTIVES RODENTS
ADOLESCENT POWER FANTASIES
NEVER BEEN LAID COMICS
SIXTH GENERATION KIRBY SWIPES MONTHLY
UBER MENCH
MARKET CRIPPLING FUNNIES
¡MUCHOS PASOS ...POCOS PESOS!
M. KAZALEH 87

YES! **We could only be talking about *The Adventures of Captain Jack*! For *Captain Jack* is not merely a shoddy attempt at taking your hard-earned cash! Goodness, no! It's all that and much more! Within its thrill-packed pages you'll see funny-animal adventure as only MIKE KAZALEH, the self-proclaimed master of comic art, can draw them!**

HUMOR • ACTION • DRAMA • ROMANCE IN EACH AND (ALMOST) EVERY ISSUE OF THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN JACK!

The Classic MIGHTY MOUSE



by Jim Korkis

"Mr. Trouble never hangs around,
When he hears this mighty sound:
'Here I come to save the day!'
That means that Mighty Mouse is on
the way!
Yes sir, when there is a wrong to
right,
Mighty Mouse will join the fight.
On the sea or on the land,
He has the situation well in hand!"

For a generation of fans, that stirring theme song heralded the opening of *The Mighty Mouse Playhouse,* which premiered on a Saturday morning in 1955. The huge success of that all-cartoon show, which cleverly re-packaged old Terrytoon cartoons, eventually generated what is now known as the Saturday morning cartoon ghetto. It wouldn't be until 1962 and the introduction of *The Bugs Bunny Show* that Mighty Mouse and his friends would find their supremacy challenged.

How could a program composed of four 1940s cartoons hold a nation of youngsters in thrall for over ten years from 1955-1966? The answer, of course, is that the main character was so amazing that he transcended weak stories and inspired a sense of wonder unequalled in most animated characters.

Mighty Mouse was the creation of the Paul Terry Studios. The late '30s were a turning point for animation studios. With the advent of sound and color, audiences were no longer content to be amused simply because a character moved. Originally, most animated cartoons were merely a loose collection of gags with little attention given to character and story development. Pulling the legs off a horse and then sticking them onto a wheelbarrow that galloped away into the sunset was deemed clever enough to entertain the masses. However, in the late '30s, that approach was no longer sufficient and animation studios found themselves forced to find new inspiration for the traditional funny animals.

One of the most successful animation studios of the time was Paul Terry's Terrytoons. Terry never strove for excellence nor experimentation like his contemporary, Walt Disney, but was content to grind out harmless cartoon adventures with forgettable characters like Farmer Alfalfa and Puddy the Pup. Animator Gene Deitch remembered Terry wandering around the studio measuring each animator's stack of completed drawings. When the drawings reached an arbitrary point on his ruler, Terry would decide it was time to put an end to that particular cartoon.

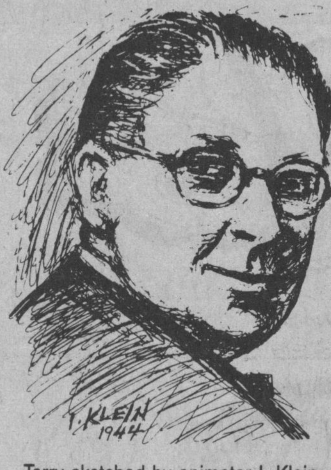
This method was in stark contrast to studios like Disney and Warners where gags and story structure evolved into a science. terry was forcing out stories from the Story Department every two weeks and was contributing many of the gags himself. The early '40s were a turning point for Terry with the development, almost by accident, of stronger characters like Gandy Goose, Dinky Duck, Heckle and Jeckle, and a character who still outshines all of Terry's other work—Mighty Mouse!

In the 1940s, the popularity of Superman was enormous and animator I. Klein came up with a one-shot idea to spoof the whole concept. Klein conceived of a super-powered fly, the smallest creature he could imagine, who would imitate the Man of Steel. Terry was interested in the idea but some historians claim that Terry thought a fly was too small to animate when it was battling larger menaces. A short while later Terry suggested developing the story but using a mouse instead of a fly.

Late in 1942, Terrytoons released the classic *The Mouse of Tomorrow.* Cruel cats are subjugating innocent mice. One of these poor little mice, chased by a hungry cat, dashes into a supermarket for safety. In the supermarket, the mouse bathes in Super Soap, swallows Super Soup, munches Super, Celery and plunges head first into Super Cheese. When the mouse reappears, he is now a Super Mouse! Attired in blue tights with red shorts and a red cape, this mouse of tomorrow is able to beat up all the cats and send them to the moon.

(Actually, Mighty Mouse has multiple origins. Besides this first cartoon, in *Pandora's Box* (1943) it is revealed that Mighty Mouse became super by swallowing vitamins A through Z, and in *The Johnstown Flood* (1946) it is shown how a little mouse ranger drinks from a jug labeled "Atomic Energy" and is transformed into a super mouse. The comic book series insisted that one dark and stormy night in a deep forest, a cloaked figure left a basket at the front door of an elderly mouse couple. The mouse couple took the baby in and soon found he had powers and abilities far beyond mortal mice, including the ability to fly and to perform great feats of strength. When he grew older, the super mouse left the old couple and their forest home to help mankind as the one and only Mighty Mouse. Interestingly, many of the Mighty Mouse comic book stories were written and drawn by Terry animators who worked on Mighty Mouse including Tom Morrison, a Terry storyman who also did the speaking voice of Mighty Mouse in the cartoon series.)

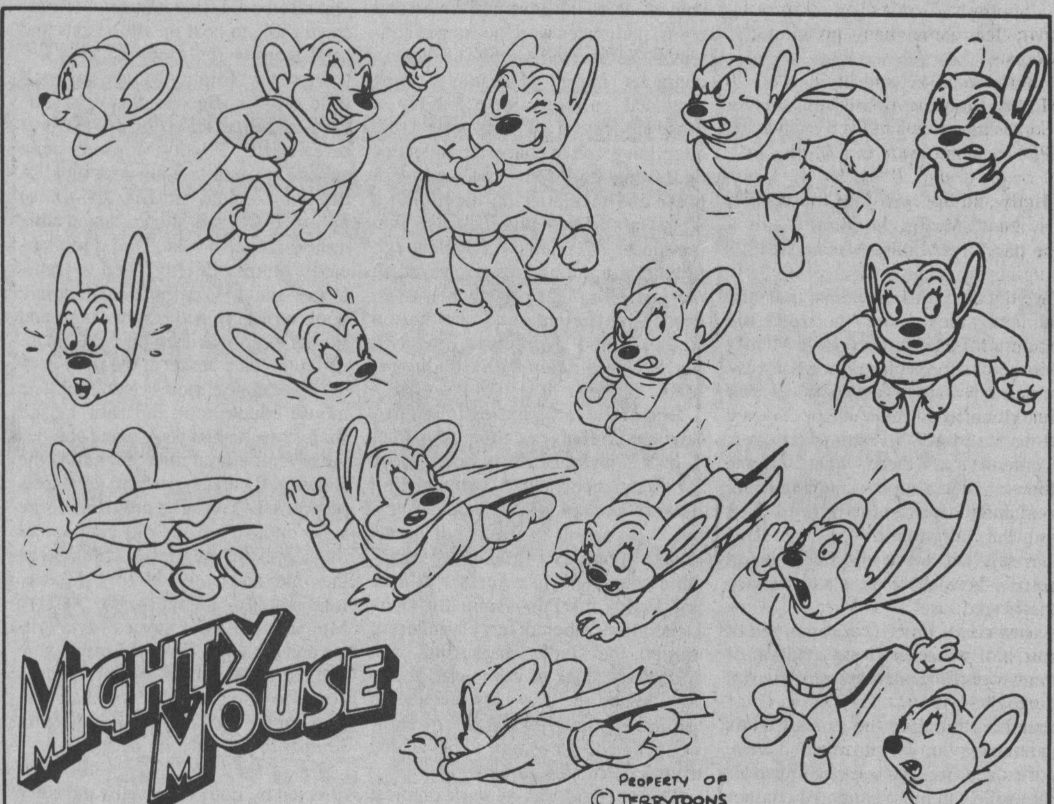
The Mouse of Tomorrow was directed by Eddie Donnelly and story credit was given to John Foster. The cartoon was an instant success and within a month a second "Super Mouse" cartoon was released. However, within a year the character's costume and name were changed. It was long a fannish rumor that the publishers of Superman threatened a lawsuit for infringement of copyright and some fans insist that even Walt Disney expressed concern that the character looked much too similar to Mickey Mouse. There has never been any factual support for these rumors. Within recent years, a Terry staffer, Bill Weiss, has claimed that the real reason was that when the first cartoon was in preparation, a Terrytoons employee who left the studio took the idea with him and sold a Supermouse character to *CooCoo Comics* (published by Nedor Publications) and the first issue hit the stands the very same month that *The Mouse of Tomorrow* appeared. *CooCoo Comics*' Supermouse gained his powers from eating supercheese and was a somewhat popular comic book character of the '40s and '50s. Nedor had been able to copyright the character's name before Terry could and Terry was placed in the unenviable position of having a cartoon series that giving popular free advertising to the comic book. By 1944, the colors of the costume and the name of Terry's character were changed. When the cartoons were released to television, the early Super Mouse cartoons were re-dubbed to eliminate the name.

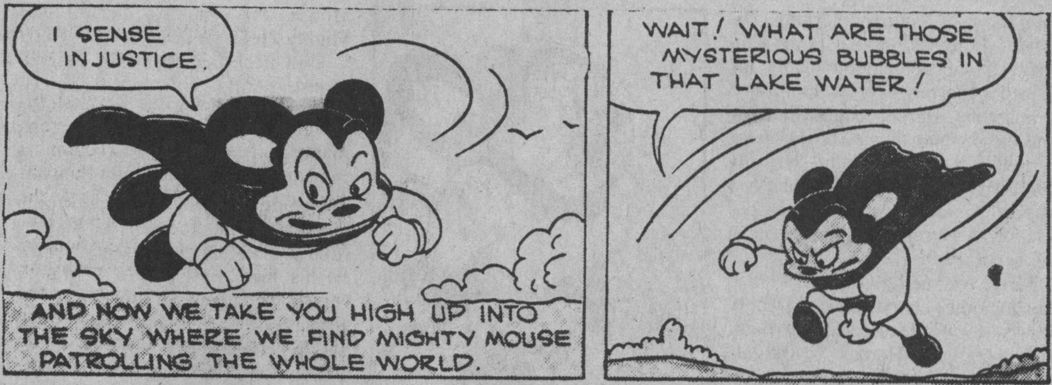


Terry sketched by animator I. Klein.

Mighty Mouse himself made it into the comic books. In *Terrytoons* #38 (dated November 1945) Mighty Mouse made his first appearance. Believe it or not, *Terrytoons* the comic was published by Timely (now known as Marvel) and Stan Lee is listed as editor of Mighty Mouse's early comic book adventures, perhaps even contributing a story or two. The artists who illustrated the Timely issues were Jim Mooney, Mike Sekowsky, and Al Jaffee. Mighty Mouse proved so popular that he was spun off into his own book.

For unknown reasons, Terry shortly shifted the rights of his screen characters from Timely to a beginning company known as St. John Publishing Co. Many collectors seek the Mighty Mouse stories from this company because the stories were done by Terry animators who were working on the Mighty Mouse cartoon series the same time they were picking up extra money by moonlighting on the comic book. This practice was quite common with animators at all studios, including those at Disney and Warners. The St. John issues of *Mighty Mouse* feature work by Connie Rasinski (probably the best director of Mighty Mouse cartoons, who really helped shape the version of Mighty Mouse that has become the standard), Art Bartsch (an animator and director at Terrytoons who was also a popular background artist), Jim Tyer (a legend among knowledgeable animation fans—see Ralph Bakshi's comments elsewhere in this issue—and who animated on the *Mighty Mouse* series) and Carlo Vinci (a top Terry animator who imitated Rasinski's style). Tom Morrison, the speaking voice of Mighty Mouse and a storyman at Terrytoons, also contributed to the St. John comic book




I SENSE INJUSTICE.
AND NOW WE TAKE YOU HIGH UP INTO THE SKY WHERE WE FIND MIGHTY MOUSE PATROLLING THE WHOLE WORLD.
WAIT! WHAT ARE THOSE MYSTERIOUS BUBBLES IN THAT LAKE WATER!

From *Adventures of Mighty Mouse* #17, the inimitable Jim Tyer Mouse of Tomorrow.

stories. (The singing voice of Mighty Mouse was provided by the tenor tones of Roy Halee.)

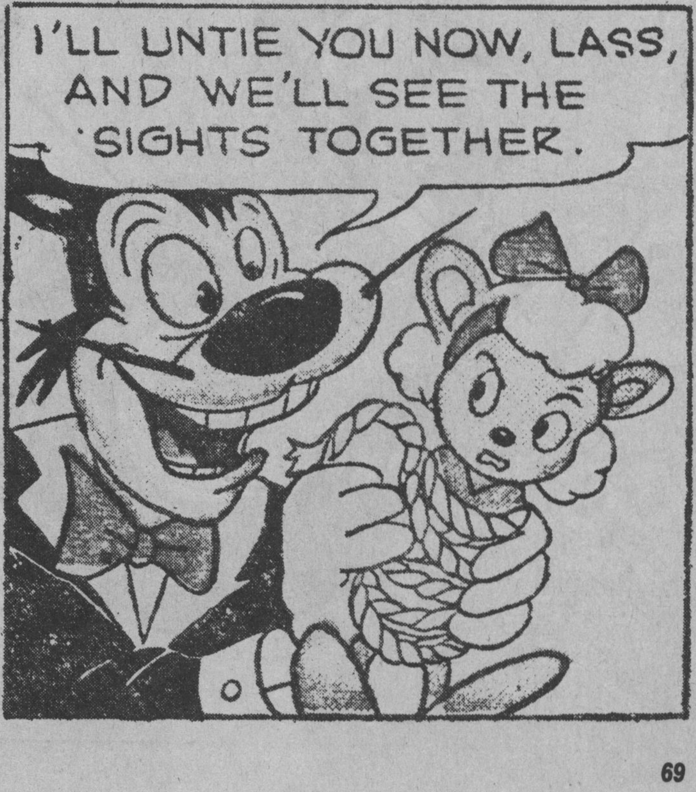
The comic book stories by the Terry crew centered on Mighty Mouse and his girlfriend, the sexy mouse known as Mitzi (not Pearl Pureheart), who battled an evil villain with a pencil-thin mustache known as Claw (not Oil Can Harry and his handlebar mustache). As the years went on, the rights to the characters drifted to Pines in 1955 (when Terry sold his studio to CBS) and later in the early '60s to Dell/Gold Key/Whitman, who seemed to be cornering the market on comic book adaptations of cartoon funny animals. Some stories at this point were done by Fred Fredericks, perhaps best known for his work on *Mandrake the Magician*. Just recently, Spotlight Comics has revived the character, using many popular cartoonists.

Between 1942 and 1961 over 90 Mighty Mouse cartoons were made. (Some animation fans even include the 1950 cartoon *Gandy Goose and Sourpuss in Comic Book Land*. When Gandy and Sourpuss are chased by a bad giant, Mighty Mouse flies out of the pages of Mighty Mouse Comics singing his famous "Here I come to save the day!" just in time to save the hapless pair.) Many of the early Mighty Mouse cartoons have Mighty Mouse only appearing during the last minute or two of his own cartoon. Paul Terry explained the concept. "If you go back through history, when a person is down and there's no more hope, you say, 'It's in God's hands now'. . . So, taking that as a basis, I'd only have to get the mice in a tough spot and they say, 'Isn't there someone who can help?' 'Yes, there is someone; it's Mighty Mouse!' So down from the heavens he'd come. . .and lick the evil spirit, or whatever it was, and everything would be serene again. It was a pattern-made thing." This concept became limiting to the storymen and animators who began to experiment with different approaches including having Mighty Mouse disguised as a "mysterious stranger" in a trenchcoat and slouch hat who rips off his disguise just in time to serve justice, and having mini-operettas such as the Academy Award nominated short *Gypsy Life* (1945).

Finally, in the late '40s, Terrytoons developed a more successful approach to the series. Rasinski had direced one of an eight cartoon series that Terry had released in 1933-1937. The series had a black-mustached fiend known as Oil Can Harry who chased a helpless heroine named Fannie Zilch who was rescued by a young hero named Strongheart. The series, a parody of turn-of-the-century melodramas and silent movie serials, had been popular so the Terry staff re-adapted the characters substituting Mighty Mouse for Strongheart, changing the villain into a cat and transforming the heroine into the rather bland Pearl Pureheart. Using operetta type scores, and beginning with Rasinski's *A Fight to the Finish* (1947), this new approach to the character brought even greater success. Soon, Mighty Mouse was the symbol of the Terrytoon Studio.

Paul Terry began to sell his old cartoons to television in 1952. He was the first major cartoon producer to do so. In 1955, CBS offered him three and a half million dollars for his studio and properties. In a move that still surprises everyone, Terry agreed. (Bill Weiss, who took over as executive producer of Terrytoons, claimed that the network recouped its investment within two years.) For most fans, the last "real" Mighty Mouse cartoon was made and released in 1954, *The Reformed Wolf*. After acquiring the characters, DBX developed an all-car-

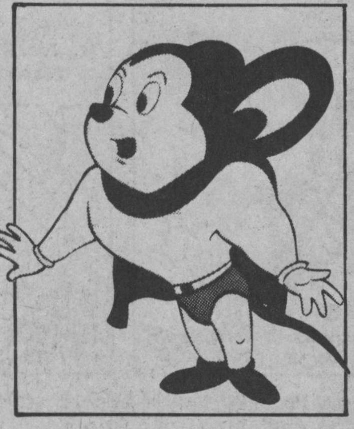
From *Mighty Mouse Comics* #30, Oil Can Harry (absent from the new cartoons).


I'LL UNTIE YOU NOW, LASS, AND WE'LL SEE THE SIGHTS TOGETHER.

toon show for Saturday morning. *The Mighty Mouse Playhouse* set the standard and opened up the battle for Saturday morning. New wraparound animation was produced for the show and the popular theme song became ingrained in the public mind so firmly that even 30 years later comedian Andy Kaufman could use the song as fodder for an outrageous comedy bit in his early act.

Terrytoons, under CBS, went ont to develop other characters like Deputy Dawg, Hector Heathcoate, Astronut, and the Mighty Heroes. In the late '50s-early '60s they tried to revive some of the old Terrytoons characters and three new Mighty Mouse cartoons were made, *Outer Space Visitor, The Mysterious Package* (with Ralph Bakshi listed in the credits as an animator) and *Cat Alarm*. Eventually, Viacom in the '60s inherited all of CBS Films' properties and Terrytoons as a cartoon producing plant disappeared although licensing of the characters continued. Paul Terry died at the age of 84 in 1971.

In 1979, CBS revived the character of Mighty Mouse in a new series of Saturday morning cartoons produced by Filmation, the company responsible for such animated gems as *He-Man, The Archies* and *Fat Albert. The New Adventures of Mighty Mouse and Heckle and Jeckle* only lasted one season. Mighty Mouse appeared in several segments (including a 16-chapter serial entitled "The Great Space Race" and a series of Mighty Mouse "Environmental Bulletins") and his voice was provided by Alan Oppenheimer. Mighty Mouse still did battle against Oil Can Harry (Dom DeLuise provided the voice) who still pursued Pearl Pureheart, but older fans felt the show lacked that special magic. (Viacom International has available for syndication a package of 75 half-hour *Mighty Mouse* shows. Only 49 half hours feature Mighty Mouse, the other 26 feature The Mighty Heroes.)



Late Terrytoons Mouse: Ugh!

As a licensing character, Mighty Mouse is still visible on toys, candy, and health food cereals. Recently, he became the mascot of *New England Playworld*, an amusement park in Hudson, New Hampshire that features Terrytoon characters. The park even features a gigantic statue of Mighty Mouse, arms upraised and a big smile on his face. And wasn't it Mighty Mouse who appeared in the first 3-D comic book back in 1953 and his success generated a new comic book fad?

Animation fans eagerly look forward to the new Saturday morning Mighty Mouse show in hopes that it may capture that special magic that is so fondly remembered. When asked about the character, they can only echo those famous words uttered by so many recently rescued mice who proclaim: "What a mouse. What *a* mouse!" ●

JIM KORKIS is a well-known animation historian who has written for a variety of publications about the magic of animation. He would like to acknowledge the research of Will Friedwald, Leonard Maltin, Jerry Beck, and George Woolery which helped confirm many of the facts in this article.

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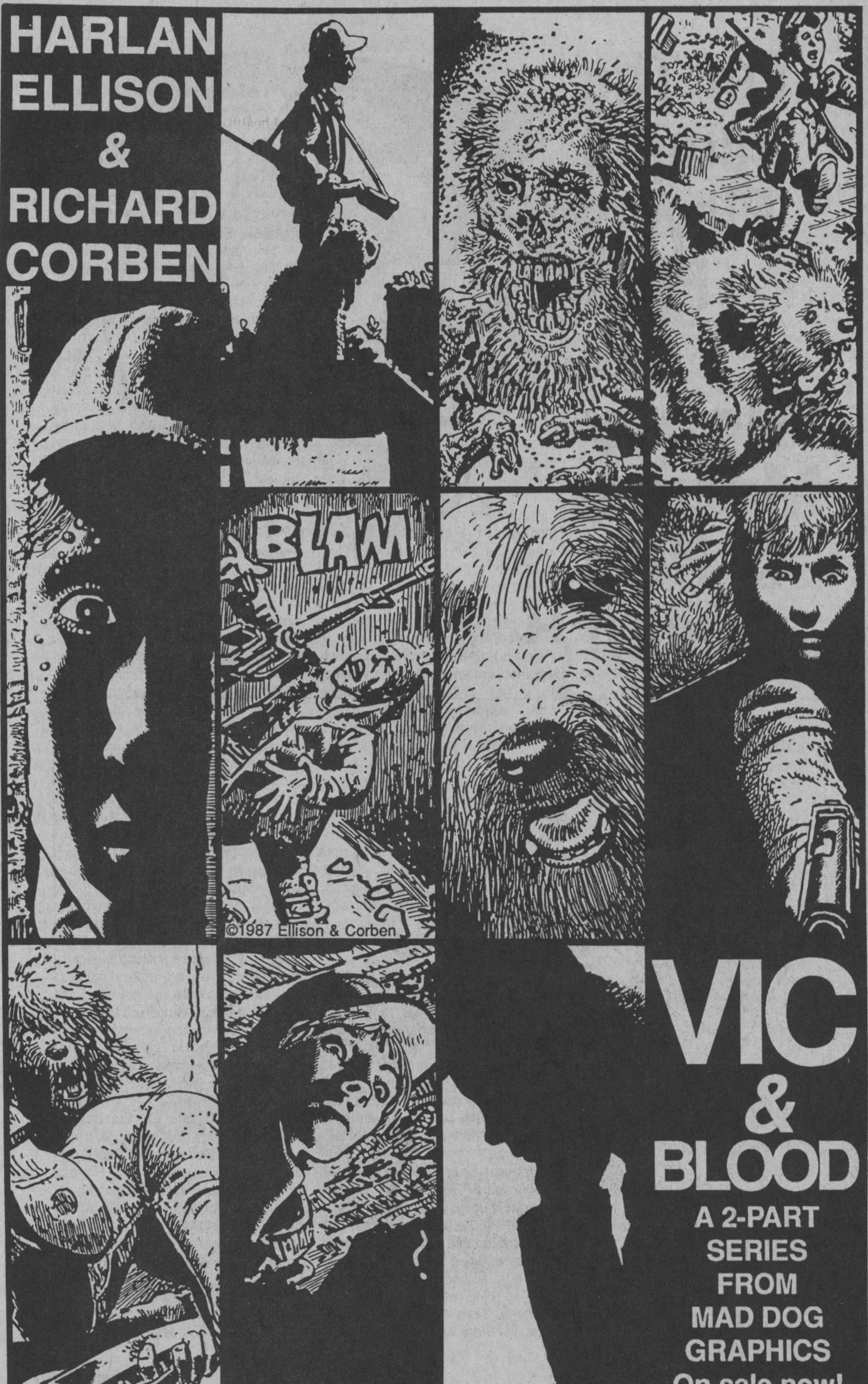
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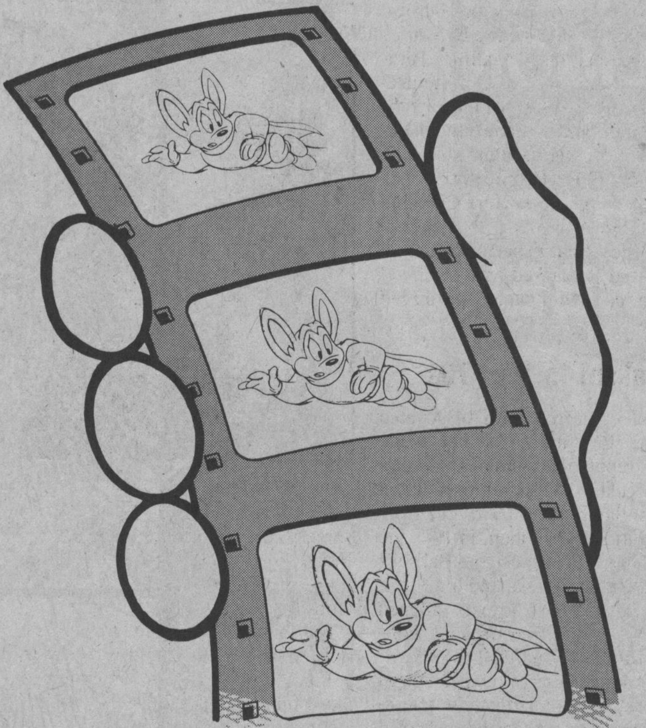


by Fred Patten

"He-e-e-re he comes, to save the day!"

"He" is Ralph Bakshi, the maverick animation creator who rose to fame during the 1970s for introducing "adult" animated cartoons to the American public. "Who" he is saving is Mighty Mouse, the popular animation and comic-book star of the 1940s and 1950s, who disappeared after a previous weakened TV incarnation eight years ago. "What" Bakshi may be saving is America's TV cartoon industry itself—if his new studio's first TV series, *Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures*, has the impact that his supporters hope it will.

Terrytoons and Bakshi

Ralph Bakshi first made his mark on the public's consciousness in 1972, with the release of his (and Steve Krantz's) animated version of Robert Crumb's *Fritz the Cat.* But Bakshi had entered the animation industry 15 years earlier, in 1956, when he was 18 years old. The studio that he joined was Terrytoons, one year after its founder, Paul Terry, had sold it to CBS and retired.

Terry had been making animated cartoons since 1915, under various corporate names. ("Terrytoons" was started in 1930.) Terry was notorious as the studio head who was the most reluctant to keep up with changing times. The *Mighty Mouse* cartoons, begun in 1942 as "Super Mouse," were by far Terrytoon's most popular series. Yet there was more of a bland sameness to them than there was with the different cartoons of any other studio's star.

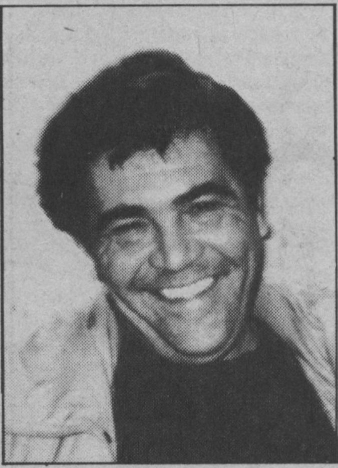
When CBS bought Terrytoons in 1955, one of the first things it did was to bring in a new young supervisor, Gene Deitch, to change this. As Mike Kazaleh, one of Bakshi's new layout artists, puts it, "The one thing [Terrytoons] did not do in the old ones was to do anything resembling a topical gag. It's difficult to date a *Mighty Mouse* cartoon. They did them for years, and it's hard to tell when they were made, because the Terry studios from about '39 to '55 never really changed their style or method. It only changed in '55 after Terry sold the studio to CBS, and they put Gene Deitch in charge of it, who basically tried to bring them into the 20th century, and suddenly the art was very modern and hip. But about that time, they started dropping some of their old characters in favor of newer ones. They only made three *Mighty Mouse* cartoons after [1955], one in '59 and the last two in '61."

So Ralph Bakshi got his start at Mighty Mouse's studio just as it was phasing that character out. Bakshi was Terrytoons' final "whiz kid." He rose from cel opaquer to animator to director in seven or eight years, handling both TV cartoons such as *Deputy Dawg* and theatrical cartoons such as *Sad Cat* and *James Hound*. In 1966 CBS named Bakshi as Terrytoons' newest Supervising Director. Bakshi created one new TV series for the dying studio, *The Mighty Heroes*, a parody of comic-book super-heroes. Then he left to assume the Director's post at the seemingly-healthier Paramount Cartoon Studios. Unfortunately, he was there for only a few months when Paramount's management decided to close its cartoon studio in December 1967. (Ironically, Terrytoons lasted into 1968 before CBS shut it down). Following this, Bakshi abandoned the established animation studios and embarked on a series of independent theatrical animated features.

Bakshi in the '70s

It was these, starting with the X-rated *Fritz the Cat* in 1972, that made Bakshi's reputation as an angry young taboo-breaker. The autobiographical (and similarly racy) *Heavy Traffic* followed in 1973, and then, in 1975, the movie that would almost end Bakshi's career, the controversial and little-seen *Coonskin*; attacked for its alleged racism by CORE (the militant Congress Of Racial Equality), *Coonskin*, aside from an initial two-week run in New York, remains virtually unreleased. (Despite—or perhaps because of—this, it's a *cause celebre* among Bakshi's supporters, some of whom claim it's his finest film; it remains one of Bakshi's own particular favorites.)

Bakshi sought to recoup his fortunes with the back-to-back fantasies *Wizards* and *The Lord of the Rings*, then *American Pop* and *Hey, Good Lookin'*. With the exception of *Hey, Good Lookin'* (a 1975 project that had been aborted when the *Coonskin* fiasco hit, then was finished several years later), these movies relied more and more heavily on rotoscoping, a process whereby animators trace the frames of pre-filmed action. Animators tend to regard rotoscoping, when used extensively, as the "easy way out," and the results are often questionable at best. This period of Bakshi's career culminated in 1983 with the release of *Fire and Ice*, a poorly-received sword-and-sorcery adventure based on designs by Frank Frazetta and written by comic-book scripters Roy Thomas and Gerry Conway.



Ralph Bakshi: re-animator.

Bakshi then announced that he'd said everything that he had to say in animation, and that he intended to move on to other things. He bought a house in New York which was large enough to set up an art studio, and began to paint. His first fine-art exhibition, "Last Days of Coney Island," has just been held at the Phillip Dash Gallery in New York City, from 10 September to 11 October of this year.

Bakshi did not become an artistic hermit. He maintained his friendships with many Hollywood animators and he became a guru to several new ones, all of whom bewailed the declining quality of American animation. In 1986 Bakshi and one of his friends, John Kricfalusi, agreed to produce a music video for the Rolling Stones. This video, "Harlem Shuffle," enabled Bakshi to attempt something new. He directed all the live sequences while Kricfalusi, an acolyte of Bob Clampett's style, directed the animation. "Harlem Shuffle" was a success. Then CBS invited Bakshi to create something for them for Saturday morning TV, a challenge he immediately accepted.

This came as a surprise to a number of people. Bakshi, the taboo-shattering satirist, up against Standards and Practices? Bakshi, the crusader for quality animation, working in the notoriously tawdry assembly-line Saturday-morning field? The director of *Fritz the Cat* doing. . .*children's animation*, for God's sake? What was going on?

"An Interesting Challenge"

"I've always wanted to do something for Saturday morning," Bakshi explained in a telephone interview from his apartment in New York. "I spent [the last] four and a half years watching Saturday morning cartoons, and even under the roughest of conditions, which is what we had [at Terrytoons], I thought something better could be done. I thought that would be an interesting challenge that, unlike feature films, would only require five or five and a half months of my time. So when I was approached by Judy Price of CBS to come out of retirement, I said, 'All right!' I took the opportunity to get away from painting for awhile—after four and a half years in the studio by [myself] all the time. There's other kinds of life out there! I thought it was a good opportunity to get out of the studio for awhile. . ."

When Price asked Bakshi for suggestions on what he wanted to do, "I thought of Mighty Mouse immediately, because. . .I don't know why!" Bakshi laughs. "I was thinking kids' shows, something for Saturday morning, and it just popped into my mind! I've always liked the character, and I thought it would be a fun thing to do." When Price greeted the concept with enthusiasm ("she popped outta her chair, she went crazy!" as Bakshi puts it), the animator set about assembling a deal and a crew.

CBS had long since relinquished all of its animation films to Viacom International, Inc., so Bakshi had to get the

MIGHTY MOUSE'S NEW THEME SONG

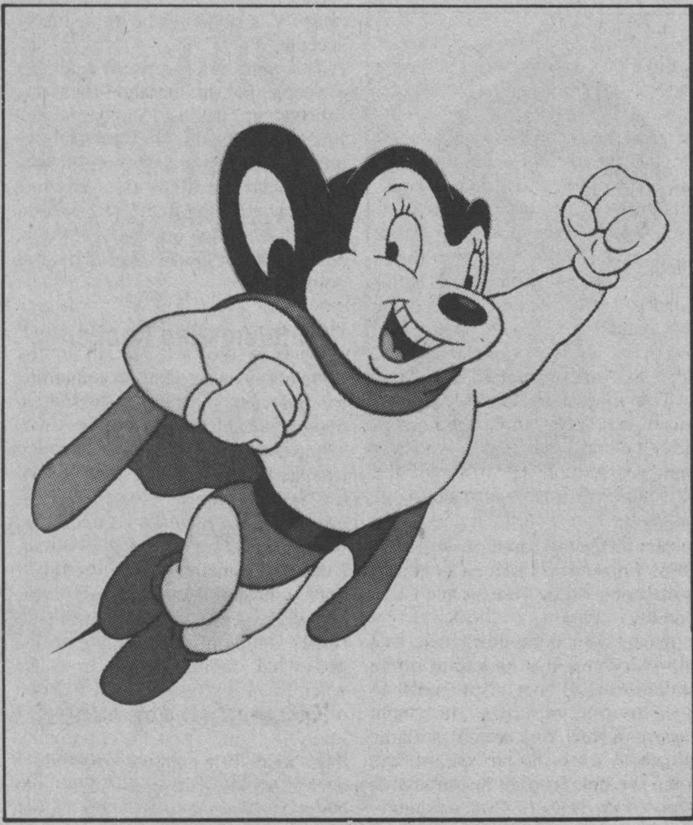
Zoom, zoom, zoom, zoom. . .

Here he comes, that Mighty Mouse;
Coming to vanquish the foe
With a mighty blow!
Don't be afraid any more
'Cause things won't be like they've been before!

"Here I come, to save the day!"
Thank goodness Mighty Mouse is on his way!
So let the trumpet players play (ta-rah! ta-rah!)
For Mighty Mouse is here today!

Here he comes, that Mighty Mouse;
Just like a bolt from the blue
With a heart that's true!
Fighting evil, fighting crime,
And always there in the nick of time!

Here he comes, to save the day!
And he will prove that crime will never pay!
So let the trumpet players play (ta-rah! ta-rah!)
For Mighty Mouse is here today!



A standard Mighty Mouse still from the Terry days.

rights from Viacom to create a new *Mighty Mouse* series for CBS's Saturday-morning lineup. This was no problem. Mighty Mouse had been an essentially dormant property for Viacom since Filmation's *The New Adventures of Mighty Mouse and Heckle and Jeckle* for CBS in 1979-80. So Viacom optioned Mighty Mouse and the rest of the Terrytoons characters to Bakshi, who then contracted with CBS to produce the new TV series. To do this, Bakshi phased out his New York-based Bakshi Productions and opened a new Hollywood studio, Bakshi Animation, to take advantage of the Hollywood TV animation industry's labor pool.

Bakshi Animation almost immediately became the Mecca for all the young "troublemakers" in the Hollywood cartoon business. Kent Butterworth, one of the six "Mighty Mouse" directors and the post-production coordinator, says, "The staff is basically people from the animation business who have worked for eight to ten years at other studios. They're all top professionals who don't get along at the other studios; who find working for other Saturday-morning studios to be oppressive and stifling, creatively. That was the big enticement for them to come to work for Bakshi's, in spite of the fact that—well, you know, Bakshi was paying good salaries, but you had to really knock yourself out! But the payoff was that you got to do your best work. You had the opportunity to do something *good!*...

"I think that everyone who worked on the show was doing the best work that they had ever done in their life. Bruce Timm has done some comics work, but he's basically an animation guy. Jim Gomez, Lyn Naylor, John Kricfalusi, Eddie Fitzgerald, myself, Tim Minton—we'd all worked for Hanna-Barbera, Ruby-Spears, Filmation. In fact, John, Eddie, Tom, and myself started at Filmation at about the same time, and one of the first shows that we'd worked on was the Filmation *Mighty Mouse* cartoon. Which was terrible! It was an *awful* cartoon! Each of us in our own way—I was an animator and a director, and Tom and Eddie were both storyboard guys; Kricfalusi was a layout man and designer—all of us were trying in our own way to fight against the regimentation of Filmation to let us make these cartoons funny. We told them, 'The scripts are stupid, it's not funny, they're talking down to the kids!' The big thing was that we felt that we knew how to be funny! We were the ones who had been looking at the Warner Brothers all these years trying to figure out how to draw that kind of stuff. But at Filmation, just because of the way that the studio was set up, it was impossible for one person or for any small group of people to have any effect. The way that Filmation was designed was to homogenize everything, to make everything look the same."

Mike Kazaleh, who executed many of the layouts and some animation for the series, echoes Butterworth. "A problem with a lot of TV animation is that people just cannot stand what they're working on! You may find this hard to believe, but almost everybody involved with modern television knows it's garbage—with the exception of certain producers and toy companies. At least on *Mighty Mouse* we had the chance to try to have some fun with it!

"We all had certain things in common, not the least of which was that we were all big fans of the old theatrical days of cartoon making. We would've loved to do something similar, but as far as paying work, we had no opportunity to do anything even close. We saw [*Mighty Mouse*] as a chance to do somethings that we would have liked to have done but didn't get to do, at least for money. We all knew each other, that was the important thing. We weren't just shut off in our rooms. We could talk together. It wasn't a big studio with thousands of people and doors everywhere. Everybody put in a *lot* of hours on this show, trying to make it as good as we could with the time available. We spent a lot of time that we didn't have to put into it."

Down Nostalgia Lane

So Ralph Bakshi himself was the only old-timer at his new studio. Reviewing the old cartoons, prior to beginning work on the new ones, must have been a nostalgic experience for him—a personal journey. "*'Personal'!?*" Bakshi explodes with delight at the comment; "You want to talk about 'personal'? You wanna hear 'personal'; I'll tell you personal! 'Personal' was the fact that I had got the rights to all the Terrytoons characters! Viacom was so excited that anyone wanted *Mighty Mouse*, and that I had sold it to television so fast!

And when Bakshi began to request tapes from Viacom's library to review the films, this personal experience came boiling back to the surface: "I knew pretty much everything, starting around '56, '57 that was there! No one at Viacom knew anything about the library. So I started calling for all these cartoons that I had worked on as a kid, so they would send me all these tapes out, and I was sitting there at this video with tears in my eyes! Time goes very fast; you don't realize it! I'm watching all these cartoons I made as a young animator, me and my friends! I'm watching the credits, and the kids—I say 'kids,' now, because I'm 48—all these young directors are sitting behind you, talking about the stuff like it's brand new and fresh, right? And I'm screaming, 'There's the first f***ing scene I ever animated!!' It was very emotional! It was like I had to re-live everything I did in animation to get going again! The whole thing was like a Twilight Zone! It was like a total retrospective of everything I'd done as a young guy—on every level, even opaquing. I'd tell the guys, 'See those f***ing cels? I painted 'em! So you guys can do dirty work, too!' I don't know, man; it's one of the strangest things I ever went through! Very peculiar! God works in strange ways!"

Nostalgia aside, though, no one wanted to go back and duplicate the Terrytoons experience. As Bakshi bluntly puts it, "When we were at Terrytoons in the old days, they were considered the garbage of the animation world! They were considered terrible animation compared to Warners, MGM—even Popeye, right? They were the low end, and even the animators at Terrytoons despised their own work. Terrytoons had to turn out an animated cartoon a week, 52 a year. You know what that is!? If that's not hack . . ." A note of irony: this is almost exactly the words a fan would use to describe most modern Saturday-morning outfits.

"But yet," Bakshi continues, "because of all the [modern] limited animation and all the stuff, all the Standards and Practices these young guys have been going through, they look at the Terrytoons work like it's *quality!* We used to sit there and think the stuff was garbage, but these young guys are sitting there and looking at the good points. That goes to show how bad the state of animation is, at least American animation! There's something sad about the fact that the garbage we used to look down upon, things have gotten *worse* than that!"

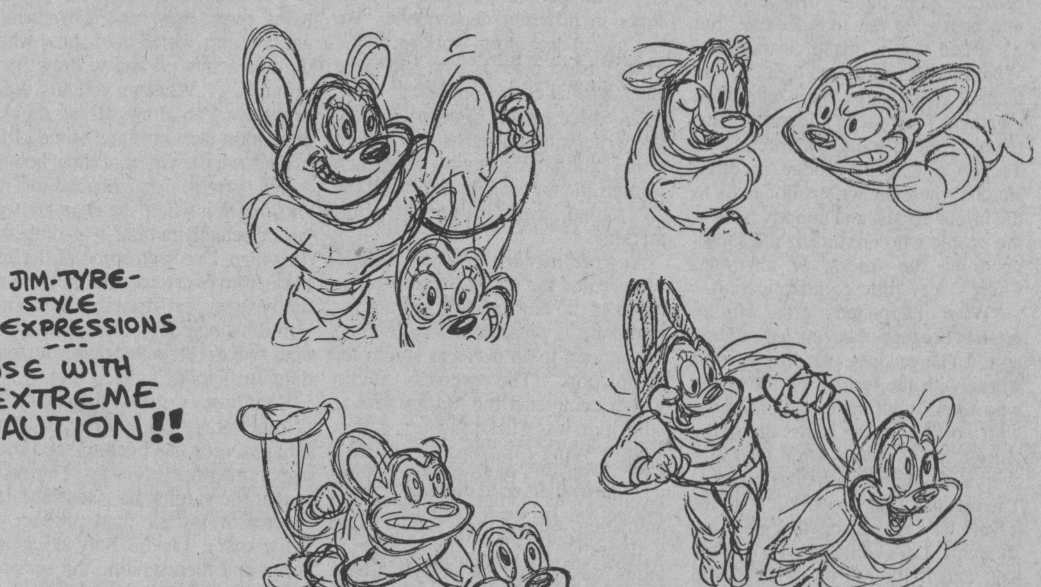
In fact, the eclectic group of influences the crew followed included one from the original *Mighty Mouse* cartoons: Jim Tyer, whom Bakshi describes as "one of [my] all-time favorite Terrytoons animators! Most of the real animation fans know that Jim was one of the greatest animators who ever lived, for humor. He distorted the characters; he wasn't worried about making the lines jibe at the same spot. Consequently, he was hysterically funny!" Mike Kazaleh, no slouch in the distortion department, concurs: "A lot of the inspiration for the new series came from Jim Tyer. He was the real screwball they had around Terrytoons. He did some of the wildest, warped, most distorted animation you could imagine. It was the funniest stuff to roll out of there. Ralph had worked with Tyer before at Terrytoons, and later on *Fritz the Cat*, which was probably the last thing that Tyer worked on [before his death]. Tyer was something of a genius, and Ralph thought so, too." As a result, when time came to put together model sheets for Mighty Mouse himself, they were often assembled from Tyer comic book panels—although one set of sketches of comes complete with a consumer warning: "JIM-TYRE-STYLE [sic] EXPRESSIONS: USE WITH EXTREME CAUTION!!"

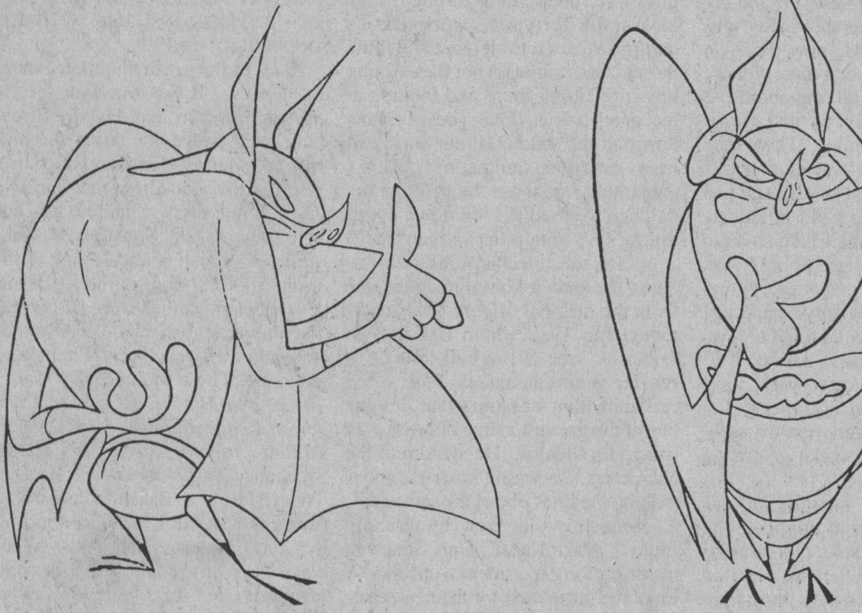
Kent Butterworth mentions other influences. "It was Jim Tyer for the pure enthusiasm, and Harvey Eisenberg for the dynamic poses and nice staging." Harvey Eisenberg, of course, is the artist who drew the *Tom and Jerry* comic book . . . and he was one of the creators of *Top Cat*. Bakshi's young staff also studied many of the limited TV cartoons of the 1950s and 1960s, when studios were still trying to combine stylistically clever limited animation with intelligently humorous dialogue. These included Jay Ward's *Rocky and His Friends*, Fred Crippen's *Roger Ramjet*, Hal Seeger's *Milton the Monster*, and Robert Buchanan's *Colonel Bleep*. And, of course, each of Bakshi's new artists was encouraged to keep in mind his personal influences among the golden years of theatrical animation. For one, it might be Tex Avery's work at MGM; for another, it might be the early UPA cartoons.

Reinventing the Wheel

Bakshi's method to restore theatrical quality to TV animation within TV budgets was to restore many of the animation production practices of the 1930s and 1940s which had been eliminated over the years in the name of "efficiency." One of these was the director/story unit system. As Mike Kazaleh and Kent Butterworth explain it, the standard American animation studio today has become an assembly-line production. A writer, who usually

In this model sheet, director John "Harlem Shuffle" Kricfalusi offers a warning to designers on the show.





From the "Night of the Bat-Bat" show—various poses. Dark Knight, eat your heart out!

works at home, is assigned to write a story and send it in. "Once a script leaves the writer," Kazaleh says, "he never sees it again," because it becomes a work-unit on the assembly line. "Nobody knows what anybody else is doing!" It goes through storyboarding, layout, and is sent overseas to be animated as part of a mechanical process. The finished cartoon is checked by the producer, whose concern seldom goes much deeper than to make sure that it is of sufficient quality that it will be acceptable to the client.

"That's a bad management approach," Kent Butterworth feels. "It may be a good way to make cars, but it's a bad way to make cartoons. . . What Bakshi's done is to create a core team of artists and writers who work together. That doesn't sound revolutionary, but in today's market, it is! There's a tendency today in other studios where the writers don't talk to the layout artists, and nobody talks to the people who are timing the shows or doing the voices, or anything. There's very little communication.

"What happened with *Mighty Mouse*, because of having a director's unit, is that you have one director who works with the writers on the show, who works with the storyboard guy, who works with the actors doing the voices, who works with basically everybody on that particular cartoon. The way that I like to work it is to say, 'Okay, let's all get together and talk about his. Let's come up with a funny gag, and if it's not the writer, who cares!? If it's a great idea, let's put it in the cartoon! Part of my job as director would be to find a way to put it into the cartoon where it would work well. Today that's revolutionary, although in all of the books I've ever read about animation, about how Disney started out in the 1920s and '30s, that's the way that he set it up. Everybody would get together and say, 'All right, let's come up with some gags!' Walt would pay $25 every time somebody came up with a good one."

Mike Kazaleh gives a broader picture of Bakshi Animation at work. "When we were in full production, we had about sixty people. It was very informal. Everybody talked to everybody else, instead of being in a factory with people assigned to their desks in different departments. We had a great deal of fun working on it." At its busiest period, "We had three units simultaneously operating." That means three groups of people (director, writers, layout artists, storyboard artists, and so forth) who were each responsible for a single cartoon of the 26 11-minute cartoons until its completion.

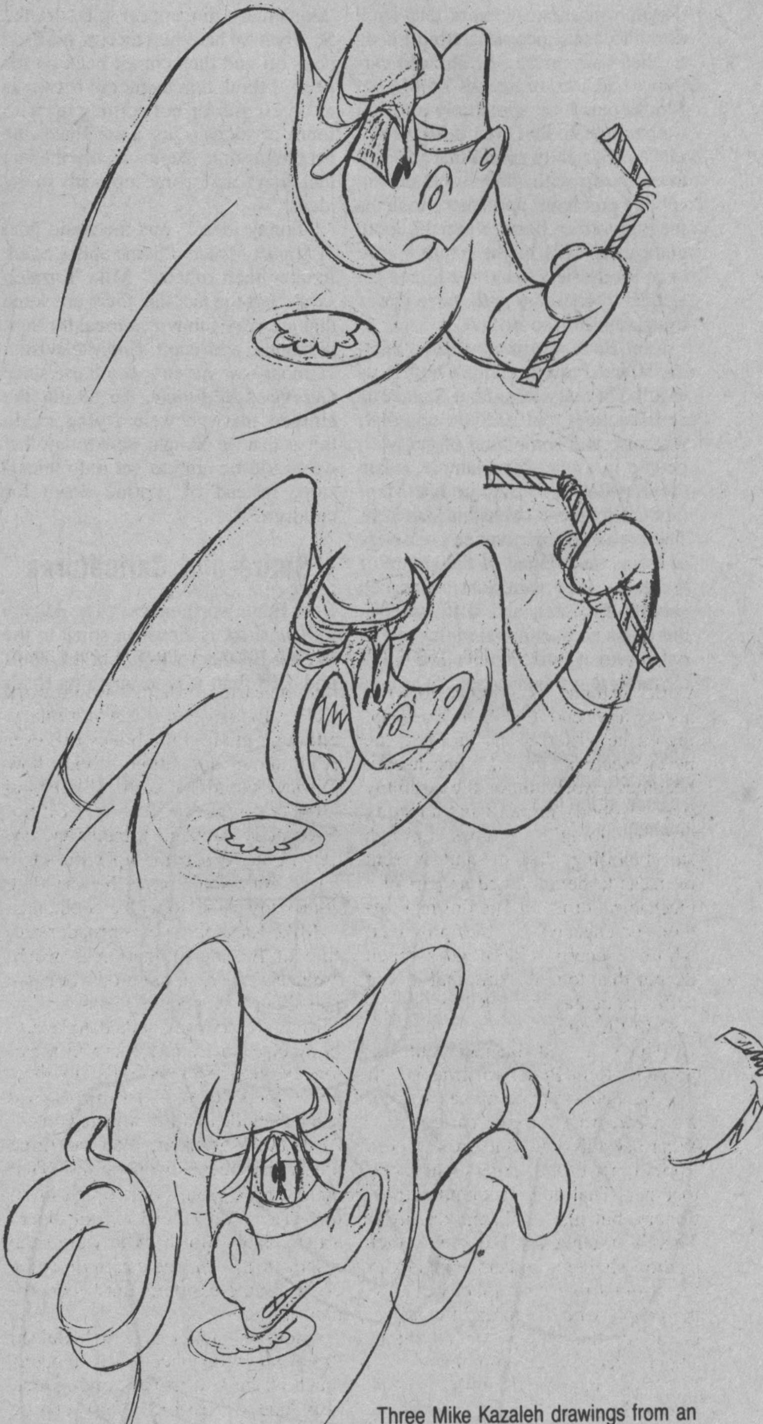
Another manner in which Bakshi "reinvented the wheel" was to get as much of the key artwork and animation done as possible before sending the cartoon to an overseas studio for completion. (The overseas studio which completed the *Mighty Mouse* animation was Cuckoo's Nest, a division of Wang Film Production Co., Inc., in Taipei.) Bakshi: "We did the layouts. What I did to 'protect' the animation, which I think should make a difference in the quality of the cartoons, was we laid out all the extreme animation poses under my supervision. Kazaleh was one of my layout men. I had two men timing the layout on exposure sheets, so virtually, what we sent to Taiwan was the completed animation as far as I was concerned. They had to clean it up, ink it, and paint it, but we had done virtually all the animation, and I think that will show in the quality of the show."

Mike Kazaleh describes the process in more detail. "Basically, all that gets done in this country any more on television is writing the scripts and doing the storyboard. Now, the storyboard is a series of drawings with the dialog written in, that shows the visual continuity of the picture. It shows you how it's going to get cut. They use the storyboard to time the picture out. In many cases, they send it overseas to get laid out, which is to show where the characters go and to draw backgrounds. . . .What we actually did in layout was to draw all of the key animation drawings and some of the breakdown drawings, to show how the action would flow. Instead of just showing you where the characters go, we are actually putting in all of the key drawings. I've seen some of the film back from overseas, and they are actually using our drawings as animation drawings. It's not perfect, but it does move a lot better than your standard stuff today."

Kent Butterworth explains why this is important. "The tendency at all the other studios has been to send more and more work overseas. The result is that the studios have less and less control over their final product. In some cases, they're only doing the script and then sending the script to maybe Canada or someplace to have the storyboard done—doing a minimal amount of design work in the studio itself, sending the storyboard somewhere else to be laid out, and then sending the layouts somewhere else, probably in the Orient, to be animated. The result is that there's no control at all. What Bakshi's done is to pull back everything up through layout into his studio." This was especially important for *Mighty Mouse* since everyone wanted to emphasize the Jim Tyer style of exaggerated distortion and flexing, which is unlike any other American animation style today. A foreign studio used to standard American TV animation would not know what to do from the storyboards alone.

A third return to classical American animation standards was that Bakshi encouraged his artists to draw original animation for each scene, keyed to that particular scene, instead of designing each drawing for potential re-use. Kazaleh: "All the drawing that we did was brand new, in every episode. We were encouraged *not* to do very rigid drawing, in fact to distort the characters to fit the mood and the action—to make them more flexible, so that we weren't just tracing the model sheets like you're supposed to do in a standard television production. . . We have the dialog before we lay it out, so we can listen to the voices and make the poses and expressions work with the voice. That's something that they don't really do any more. The music and effects go afterwards. In television animation, they [the studios] don't really like people to have expressions, because if they do, that means that they can't use the footage over again. The great example is Filmation, whose system that they've been using for 20 years is to work almost entirely with stock footage, as existing drawings. They do the voices before, but the point is that the drawings can't have any expressions so that they are able to put the drawings over any line of dialog that they want. Then can get miles of footage out of seven drawings. We were permitted, nay, *encouraged* to put expressions and body English into our characters!"

Kent Butterworth notes that one result of this process is that, "Every scene is animated by a different artist, so within each cartoon you'll see Mighty Mouse drawn in slightly different styles. Mike Kazaleh will draw him in one scene, one scene will be my drawings, another scene it'll be another artist's drawings." Readers of Mike Kazaleh's *The Adventures of Captain Jack* can have fun watching *Mighty Mouse* with a sharp eye to spot the scenes where Kazaleh's art style flashes by.



Three Mike Kazaleh drawings from an angry Cow sequence. Dialogue: "That's the last straw!"

The Pussycats at Standards and Practices

Ralph Bakshi made a personal appearance at the Second Los Angeles International Animation Celebration in July, where he joked that anyone who wanted to see his new *Mighty Mouse* cartoons had better watch the program the first or second week that it was on, because it might not be on after CBS's censors got a look at it. In actuality, everyone says, CBS's Standards and Practices people gave them no serious trouble at all.

Mike Kazaleh says, in explaining why Mighty Mouse's old villain, Oil Can Harry, was not brought back, "It's more in the interests of variety. In some cases, our villains aren't really villains so much as just setting up something for Mighty Mouse to do. As you know, network television doesn't permit people getting hit on the head any more. . . .The old cartoons had lots of scenes of Mighty Mouse punching somebody out, but we couldn't do that even if we wanted to. This basically meant that you had to come up with other ways of him solving problems, and other problems for him to face besides punching out giant cats. This might actually have been for the best. It at least forced the writers to come up with more clever things for him to do."

Kent Butterworth clarifies, "Standards and Practices didn't bother us at all! The only thing that Standards and Practices told us to do was that, when we had some kind of gag with people in a car—for example, when the Bat-Bat is riding in his Manmobile, he has to wear his seat-belt. There was no interference creatively as far as the content of the shows or the gags. They were just concerned about traffic safety and stuff—and that there was no intentional violence." In one cartoon, the plot called for a character to get the hiccups. "The note from Standards and Practices was just, 'Don't make him appear to be drunk.' So when we have him hiccup, his head pops off and then comes back on his neck. I think that using the networks as an excuse for not coming up with funny cartoons is just a way that some people in some studios justify the fact that they can't come up with funny ideas!"

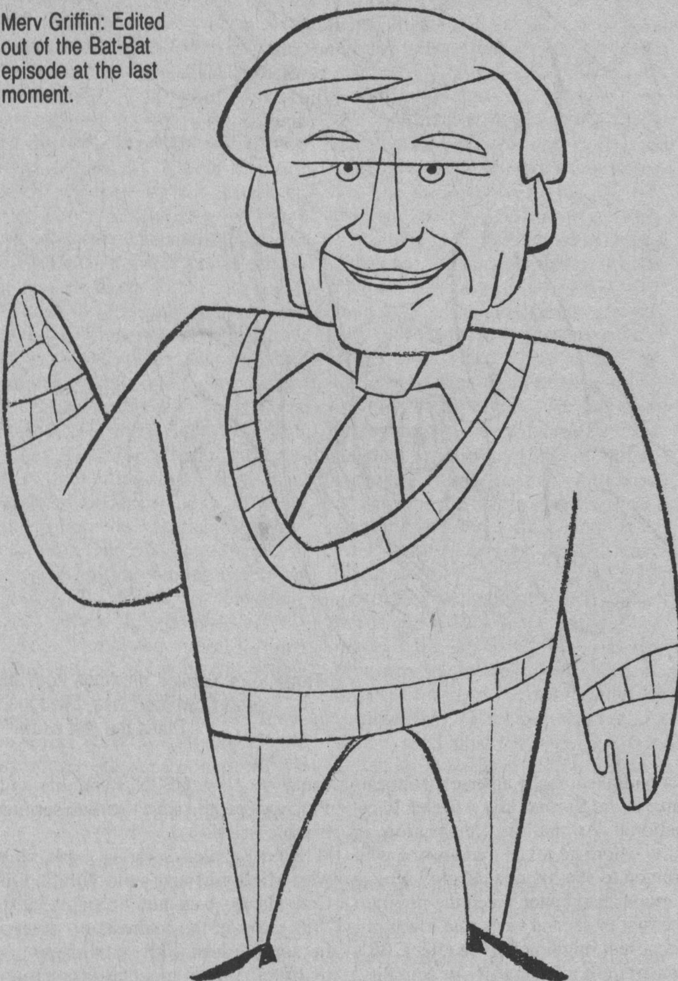
"Funny ideas" was the basic goal of *Mighty Mouse.* "Some episodes are funnier than others," Mike Kazaleh says, "but the fact that there are some that are very funny is a breakthrough in modern television. *Funny* television cartoons—we haven't seen those since *George of the Jungle*. We got into the attitude that we were trying to do things that *we* thought were funny, that we would be able to get onto television, instead of writing down for children."

Satire and Caricatures

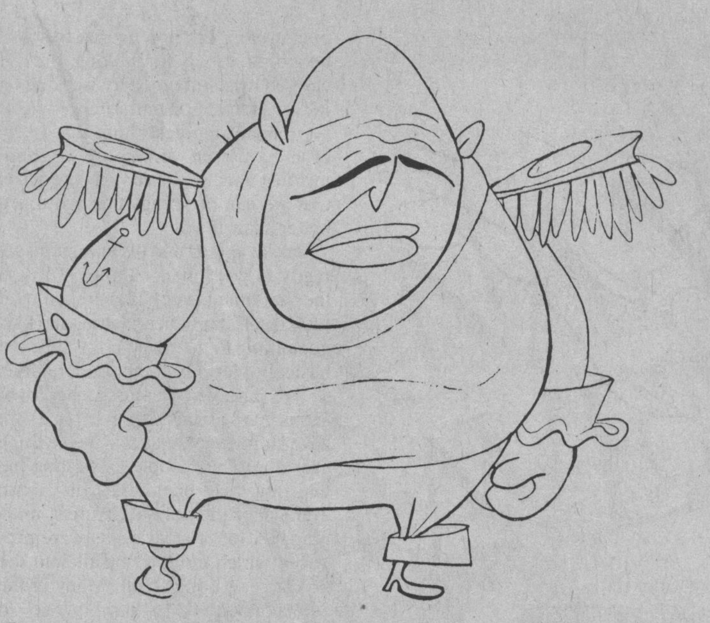
Kent Butterworth notes, "The *Mighty Mouse* show is closer in spirit to the Warner Brothers cartoons of the 1940s and '30s than it is to anything that's been done in recent years. . . . The most revolutionary, creative, 'new' concept that we've come up with is satire! Nobody's doing satire any more! It's become out of style. Ever since the old *Saturday Night Live* staff left, things have changed. People have forgotten what satire is. So that's one of our secret weapons. The thing is that all the people who worked on *Mighty Mouse*—we liked all that stuff! *Saturday Night Live, Rocky and Bullwinkle*, the old *MAD* magazine, *National Lampoon*—all that stuff! Those are our big influences, because they made us laugh. They were funny! And our biggest push was that we wanted to make cartoons that were funny, that would make people laugh by making fun of something. Clampett was very satirical, too, but of course he was satirizing what he saw happening in his age, the '40s. So we took the same approach, but we looked at it as that we had to satirize what was happening now. We're going to satirize Saturday-morning cartoons! We're going to satirize rock videos, and Molly Ringwald—the things that the *Mighty Mouse* audience will recognize."

One aspect of the Warner Brothers cartoons that the Bakshi animators practically OD'd on was caricatures. There are "guest appearances" by such notables as Kirk Douglas, Arnold Schwarzenegger, George C. Scott, and many others. Bakshi's staff sees this as a return to the policy of making cartoons for the entire family rather than just for children. Adults will recognize and be amused by the caricatures, while children may not get the double-meanings but will still be entertained by the dynamically exaggerated characterizations. There are also caricatures of classic cartoons and art styles. Again, viewers who recognize that a cartoon is a "tribute" to a particular Tex Avery, Bob Clampett, or Chuck Jones title will get an extra treat, while those who do not get the hidden joke will still find the surface humor funny enough.

Another Warner Brothers trait that the Bakshi animators are following won't be noticed by anyone except themselves and their friends. This is the in-group staff caricature. Ralph Bakshi's cigar-chomping image pops up in every cartoon, like Alfred Hitchcock's famous hidden appearances in his movies. Most of the rest of the cartoonists appear in momentary self-caricatures in crowd scenes, and the like. (For instance, John Kricfalusi appears as a doodle Mighty Mouse scrawls on the side of a telephone booth in the "Bat-Bat" episode.) However, one staffer does have a major role. Wendell Washer, a veteran Hollywood storyboard artist and a voice in several *Mighty Mouse* cartoons (he is usually the announcer,



Merv Griffin: Edited out of the Bat-Bat episode at the last moment.



Two more caricatures: Marlon Brando (above) from the "Pirates with Dirty Faces" show, and Wendell Washer (who also voiced several parts in the show).

and he is Durf in "Me-Yowww!") is caricatured as Maxie, the villain in "The Bagmouse."

Pranks like this kept the studio in high spirits all during the *Mighty Mouse* production. One of the most irrepressible of all was Ralph Bakshi himself. Mike Kazaleh says, "When things were going and everybody was working and laughing, he was really getting into it and laughing and having a good time!"

The Disney of the '80s

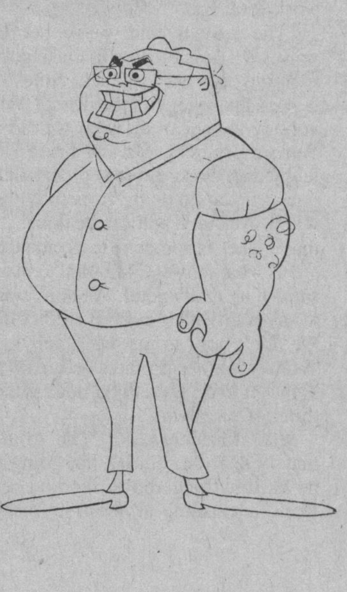
As Kent Butterworth saw it, "We were all learning. None of us knew what the heck we were doing when we started. Ralph didn't have a studio at all. He just hired a bunch of creative people and threw them all together and said, "Make a cartoon! I'll show you how to do it!' . . . He was involved in every stage of them. He read every script, he made notes on them, he tried to rewrite some of the scripts, he went to most of the voice recording sessions; every day he'd come around to everybody, looking over their shoulder, looking over their drawings, all the time making comments like, 'That's good!' or 'That's not very good!'

"Ralph wants to be the Disney of the 1980s. The role that he sees himself in is the same role that Walt had during the '30s, when he was building his studio. During the 1930s and maybe up through *Bambi*, Walt was probably *the* director of all the Disney cartoons, even though they would have Dave Hand's name or some other director's name on the screen credits. Walt was really the director of those pictures. Everything that went on the screen was what he wanted. And I think that's the way that Bakshi sees himself."

This spree of creative freedom lasted for about four months during Summer 1987. As is notorious with the TV animation industry, the network waited until almost the last minute before the premiere date before advancing the production money, and then wanted the cartoons to be completed immediately. So for those four months, Bakshi's staff of sixty worked almost around the clock to produce 26 11-minute cartoons, to be shown in 13 weekly half-hour programs of two cartoons per program. And then practically everyone was laid off.

The difference between Bakshi Animation and other Hollywood animation studios such as Hanna-Barbera, Marvel Productions, Filmation, Ruby-Spears, and DIC is that the others were all established to be long-term corporate entities. Bakshi Animation was created by Ralph Bakshi to produce a TV series as a favor to CBS, and to take a temporary vacation from his painting. Kent Butterworth explains: "A big studio like Hanna-Barbera, and the other large studios that are backed by large multi-national corporations like Taft Broadcasting or Westinghouse or New World, don't have to worry about keeping on staff after a show is finished. Basically, most studios are not able to produce a new cartoon series for the amount of money that they get as a licensing fee from the network. They deficit-finance it, and get their profits off back-end profits—re-runs, mechandising, that sort of thing.

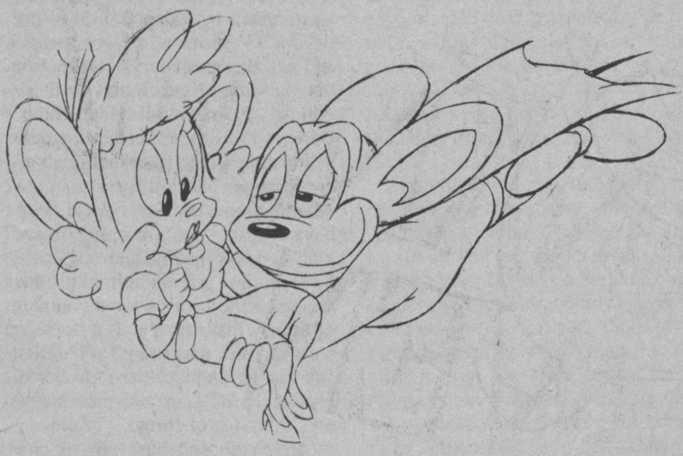
"Ralph doesn't have any association. He isn't owned by any multinational corporation. He doesn't have to answer to Taft Broadcasting. That has its advantages, creatively, in that anything Ralph wants to go into a picture, he can put into it. If he's into production and somebody comes up with a good idea, he can be like Disney and say, 'Okay, we've spent a lot of money on this scene already, but this new idea is better so let's trash our original idea!' Management-wise, a multinational corporation wouldn't allow that to happen. It's wasted money. On the bad side of it, it means that he has to produce the shows within the licensing fee budget. So for that reason, people could work for only as long as their job lasted. He couldn't carry people over to do other things; development, or any of those other things that they do at other studios. So the artwork for the *Mighty Mouse* series was done in about four months, from the stories through the storyboards, the character designs, the layouts. They were all done in about four months. And then Ralph laid everybody off."



Bakshi To The Future

Will Bakshi Animation ever produce anything else? All the ex-staff is hoping that the public will be as thrilled by watching *Mighty Mouse* as they were with making it, and that CBS will renew the show for another season. Bakshi says that he would make a second season if CBS asks him to, but otherwise he's had a nice break from his fine-art painting and he's ready to return to it.

However, Bakshi's staff and the *Hollywood Reporter* both say that he is trying to sell new animation projects. Significantly, Bakshi is not simply looking for any animation work which would keep his studio open. He has specific projects in mind which would give him the opportuni-



Ahh, love. . .

ty to experiment artistically. He has optioned the TV rights to the s-f movie *Blade Runner*, and is trying to sell it as a prime-time TV series with animated characters over live-action backgrounds. This technique has been used by other animators, notably Australia's Yoram Gross ("Dot and the Kangaroo" and its sequels), with mixed results. Bakshi himself has tried it to a very limited degree in *Heavy Traffic*, but he has new ideas about how to handle the technique that he wants to try out. Also, he would like to try his hand at designing a prime-time, adult-oriented TV series.

Another project in the planning stage is a *Mighty Mouse* theatrical feature which would mix live actors with cartoon characters. Richard Pryor has already agreed to be the live-action star. (Hey, he's already gone a round with the Man; he might as well meet the Mouse). Again, movies that mix live-action and cartoon characters are nothing new. (Think of *Mary Poppins*, *Pete's Dragon* or the upcoming *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*) Bakshi himself just employed this technique in "Harlem Shuffle." But that was a brief music video. Making animated characters relate to live actors for a feature-length narrative story—and especially having a cartoon character play opposite a star of Pryor's calibre—is a new challenge for Bakshi. So if Bakshi is able to obtain financial backing for either of these projects (or others which he is not ready to reveal yet), there is a good chance that Bakshi Animation will be hiring its staff back.

"Best Time I Ever Had"

Even if Bakshi Animation does not continue, the artists who worked on *Mighty Mouse* are proud to have been a part of it. And most of them are confident that it will continue. Kent Butterworth, when asked if there was any serious basis to Bakshi's joking prediction at the Los Angeles International Animation Celebration, that CBS's censors would have heart failure when they saw *Mighty Mouse*, says, "That was one of the worries that everybody was concerned about in the beginning. The show is so avant-garde and so irreverent in its approach, that the network would say, 'This is too much! We're not going to show this!' But so far, Judy Price and the other network people have been very supportive of it. In fact, that particular statement that Ralph made was made before they saw any of the film. Now that they've seen the film, they've seen four or five of the episodes, their only complaint is that it looks so good that it makes everything else on their network look bad!

"The system that we've set up proves it's possible to still make good cartoons in 1987. Chuck Jones is famous for saying in interviews, 'Well, nobody today can do what we did at Warner Brothers. Me and Friz [Freleng] and those guys were the only ones who could do it.' Hopefully this will prove that it still can be done. All that it takes is someone to decide that *this* is what we want. We want to make something really good. We don't want to do only what'd been done before. We don't want to just keep copying, Walt, or Warner Brothers or whatever. We want to do something new, something of our own!"

Mike Kazaleh says, "The results may be uneven, but it's not going to be like anything you've seen on network television, at least in many, many years. I'm hoping that this will be going to do for a long time. I enjoyed myself thoroughly working on it. . . . At this moment, *Mighty Mouse* is probably the best thing that many of us have ever worked on. I'm hoping that this won't remain the case, that we can do things that are much better than that."

Bakshi agrees that his animators are ready to go to better things. "It was the best time I ever had, and I enjoyed working as a producer, letting the kids go, talking to them about the stuff but basically letting them be creative. . . .We have some cartoons here that are as good as anything ever done! We have some that are as *bad* as anything ever done, but people are telling me that my bad ones are still above average for the normal Saturday morning." A lot of story ideas were proposed which couldn't be fit into the 26 cartoons done so far. Many of the animators wanted to "pay homage" to their favorite 1940s directors, partly to find out whether they could actually come up to their idols' levels when they were given creative freedom. Now that they've got that out of their systems, they're ready to move on to create unique ides and styles of their own.

One of the most intense of Bakshi's staff is Tom Minton, the head writer for *Mighty Mouse*. Minton, like Kent Butterworth, entered the animation industry by joining Filmation just as that studio was animating its 1979 version of *Mighty Mouse*. Minton says, "Ten years ago we did *Mighty Mouse* under the wrong conditions. This time we looked forward to doing it *right*!" Maybe some of their artistic decisions could have been better, because this was the first opportunity they'd had after almost ten years in the industry to practice being genuinely creative, but Minton is convinced that the sheer enthusiasm and sense of *fun* of *Mighty Mouse* is sure to make it a winner. In the process, the fat, profit-oriented executives at the other studios who ignored them, who took the attitude that cutting costs rather than improving quality was the best way to gain ratings and make money, are going to be proven wrong. Minton feels that *Mighty Mouse* and Bakshi Animation are now the bright young challengers who are going to knock the whole animation industry out of its lethargy. "If we can keep other studios up nights worrying about how to imitate us, *good!*"

Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures. Will it be another brief comet that momentarily shines in the animation industry but fails to leave any lasting result? Or will it be a supernova whose impact will cause great upheavals throughout the industry? They do say that the third time is charmed. . . ●

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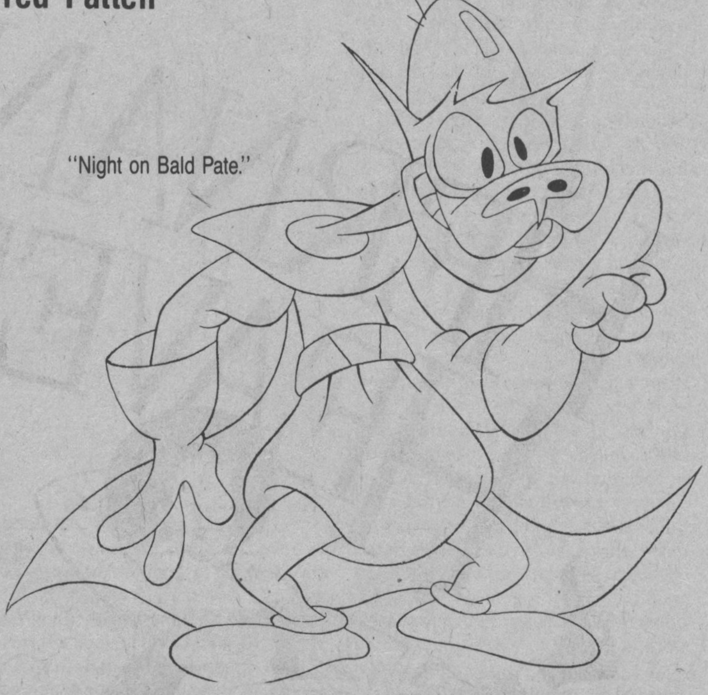
Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures

An Episode Guide by Fred Patten

As we go to press, only the first four shows (eight episodes) of the series have aired. Since CBS changed the order of the shows from Bakshi Animation's proposed running order (the first two and the second two have been reversed), the remainder of the shows may not run in the order indicated either. (CBS may have made the switch because the new running order leads off with a somewhat stronger—and certainly more action-packed—opener, "Night on Bald Pate," and follows it up with an origin story.) On the other hand, since Bakshi's choice for shows 5-8 did end up as 5-8, it's entirely possible the remainder will run in the order indicated. Watch 'em and find out. —EDS.

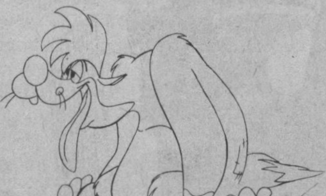


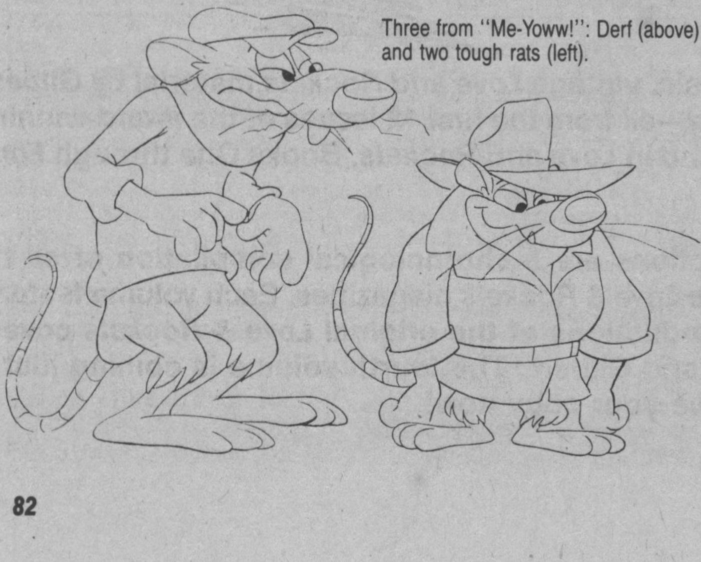
"Night on Bald Pate."

1. "Night On Bald Pate." *Premiere date, Sept. 19, 1987.* Written by Tom Minton; directed by John Kricfalusi. This is a psychological analysis of what makes an arch-villain. Petey Pate is a bald nebbish who doesn't get any respect. He decides to make himself important by becoming a master criminal. The best way to convince the public that he's really an arch-villain is to defeat Mighty Mouse. This leads to the kidnapping of Pearl Pureheart, and a climactic battle between MM and Petey at the summit of Pate Mountain.

2. "Mouse from Another House." *Premiere date, Sept. 19, 1987.* Written by Doug Moench; directed by Bruce Woodside. Scrappy, the little orphan mouse, is despondent because he doesn't have any parents. Pearl Pureheart tells him the story of another orphan who made good: Mighty Mouse. This cartoon is a parody of Superman's origin story. Mighty Mouse was born into a tough neighborhood which was being demolished, so his parents Leroj and Aral (spell those backwards) put him into a rocket and sent him to a nicer neighborhood. After growing up as the adopted son of Ma and Pa Squirrel, he becomes Mike Mouse, a mild-mannered assembly-line worker at Mouseville's cat-food factory.

3. "Me-Yowww!" *Premiere date, Sept. 26, 1987.* Written by Doug Moench; directed by John Kricfalusi. The old fable of 'Androcles and the Lion' is updated to lampoon the fawning excesses of fanboys. Mighty Mouse removes a cactus thorn from the paw of Derf, a large, stupid cat. The grateful Derf proclaims himself Mighty Mouse's biggest admirer. He dresses in an imitation super-hero costume and follows MM everywhere. This ruins Mighty Mouse's social life, since the other mice of Mouseville are terrified of the hulking cat. The kind-hearted MM becomes desperate for a way to get rid of his well-meaning fan without hurting his feelings.



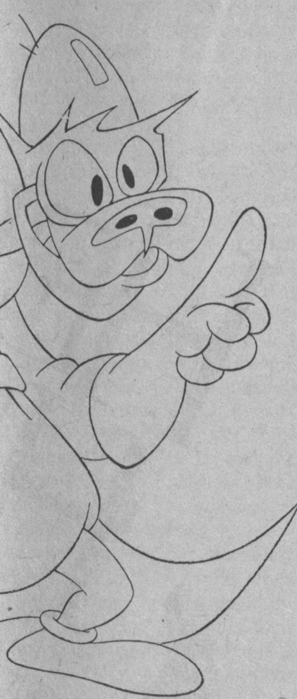


Three from "Me-Yoww!": Derf (above) and two tough rats (left).

4. "Witch Tricks." *Premiere date, Sept. 26, 1987.* Written & directed by Eddie Fitzgerald. Scrappy, the little orphan, meets the Tooth Fairy. She is too sick to deliver a dollar to a mouse child who's having a tooth pulled, so Scrappy volunteers to do it. But he goes to the wrong address, and ends up pulling a tooth from a witch. The irate witch bombards Scrappy with spells, until Mighty Mouse arrives and soothes her feelings. The witch's spells are an excuse to turn this cartoon into a zany psychedelic frolic reminiscent of Bob Clampett's wilder moments (e.g., "Porky in Wackyland.")

5. "Night of the Bat-Bat." *Premiere date, October 3, 1987.* Written by Jim Reardon; directed by John Kricfalusi. A spoof of costumed heroes in general and of the 1960 *Batman* TV program in particular. The Bat-Bat (Bruce Vein) and his sidekick, The Bug Wonder (Tick), drive around in the Manmobile to fight crime. They find clues in the most unlikely places. Their nemesis this week is The Cow, a George C. Scott type who is an enemy of all those who use dairy products because this

Adventures



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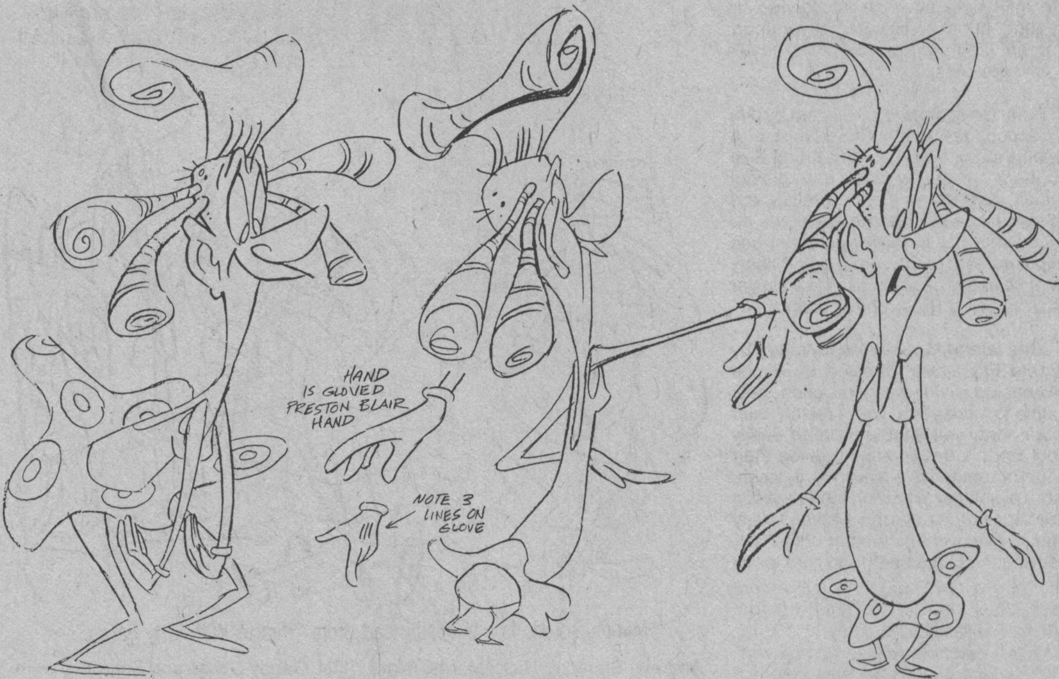
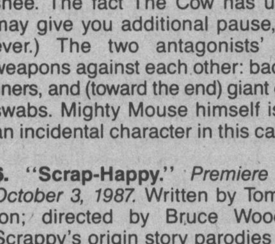

HAND IS GLOVED PRESTON BLAIR HAND
NOTE 3 LINES ON GLOVE

From "Witch Tricks," the screwy-looking Tooth Fairy. Note the reference to Preston "Red Hot Riding Hood" Blair.

exploits cows. (If you're wondering why a male villain is named The Cow, just remember that Marvel Comics has a male super-character named The Banshee. The fact The Cow has udders may give you additional pause, however.) The two antagonists' main weapons against each other: bad one-liners, and (toward the end) giant cotton swabs. Mighty Mouse himself is only an incidental character in this cartoon.

6. **''Scrap-Happy.''** *Premiere date, October 3, 1987.* Written by Tom Minton; directed by Bruce Woodside. Scrappy's origin story parodies some aspects of *Pinocchio*. Scrappy, the little orphan, comes to Mouseville looking for a home. Mighty Mouse offers to be his friend, but warns him not to call for help unless he's *really* in danger. So when Scrappy is led astray by some tough kids, the Micefits (Moe, Bub, and Frawley—one of whom is a caricature, visual and vocal, of Peter Lorre), and they are all enslaved in Chester P. Chisler's Carnival for Cats, Scrappy tries to rescue them himself and almost waits too late to call for Mighty Mouse.



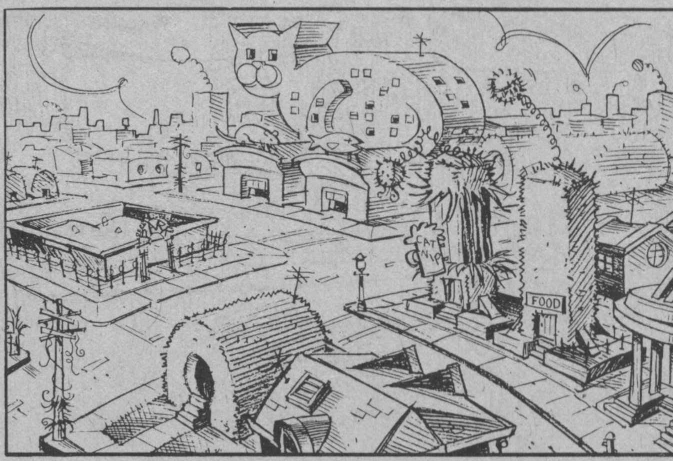
7. **''Catastrophe Cat.''** Written by Ralph Bakshi, Eddie Fitzgerald & Doug Moench; directed by Eddie Fitzgerald & Kent Butterworth. *Premiere date, October 10, 1987.* One day everything goes wrong in Mouseville. Meteors bombard Earth; trains run out of control through the city; buildings are wrecked. Mighty Mouse spends most of the cartoon staving off the escalating disasters. He finally discovers that Catastrophe Cat, a gloomy pessimist who radiates bad luck, has come to town. To save the day, MM has to find a way to cheer Catastrophe Cat up.

8. **''Scrappy's Field Day.''** Written by Jim Reardon; directed by John Kricfalusi. *Premiere date, October 10, 1987.* Scrappy's class is taking a field trip to the Museum of Natural History, but Scrappy misses the bus. Mighty Mouse takes him take through time on a personal field trip to the real prehistoric past. But this is a funny-animal world's past, and Mighty Mouse and Scrappy encounter things right out of *The Flintstones* and *2001: A Space Odyssey.*

''The Bagmouse.'' Written by Jim Reardon, Rich Moore & Andrew Stanton; directed by Kent Butterworth. Scrappy is sure that he can become a skateboard champ (he dreams of himself as the Bronze Boarder, a lampoon of the Silver Surfer) if he can just get a new board. A shady cat leads him to Maxie, the owner of a chain of fast-food restaurants for cats—which serves mouseburgers! This cartoon is basically a satire of assembly-line fast-food chains.

''The First Deadly Cheese.'' Written by Tom Minton; directed by Bruce Woodside. The Cow returns, determined to defeat Mighty Mouse in order

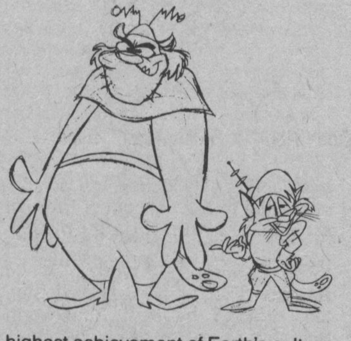
Catville (oh, you guessed that, did you?).

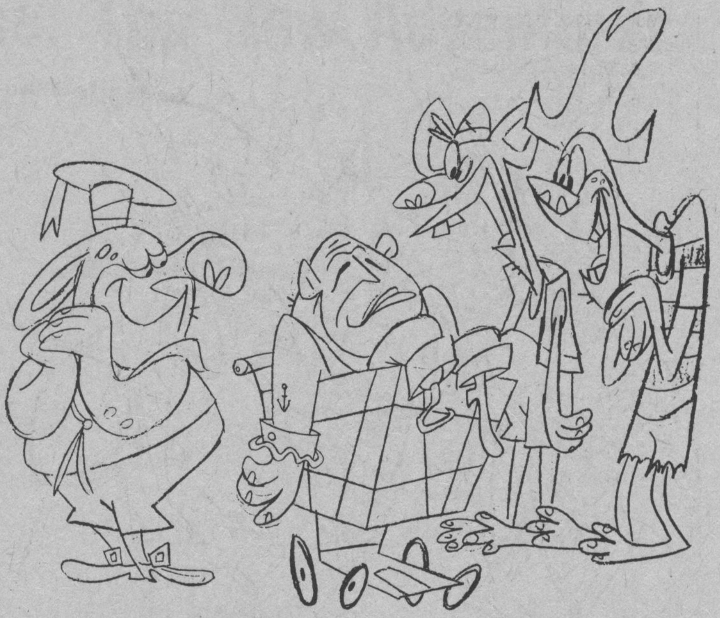


to intimidate all mice into giving up eating cheese. His secret weapon: green limburgerite, Mighty Mouse's only weakness!

"Puffy Goes Berserk." Written by Jim Reardon; directed by Steve Gordon. A tribute to Tex Avery's classic "King-Size Canary." Puffy, a cute and playful kitten, eats some radiated relish and grows to giant size. He becomes so huge that his innocent scamperings are a menace to the community. Mighty Mouse has to inflate himself to a similar size to bring Puffy under control.

"This Island Mouseville." Written by Eddie Fitzgerald; directed by Bruce Woodside. Two arrogant alien cats come to Mouseville. They feel that their superiority will enable them to easily loot Earth's treasures. However, their idea of treasures is our idea of trash, so it's unclear whether they're really menaces of not. Mighty Mouse finally has to deal with the nastier of the two, leaving the other safely addicted to the highest achievement of Earth's culture; a particularly inane Saturday morning kidvid program, "The Dippy Chipmunk Show."





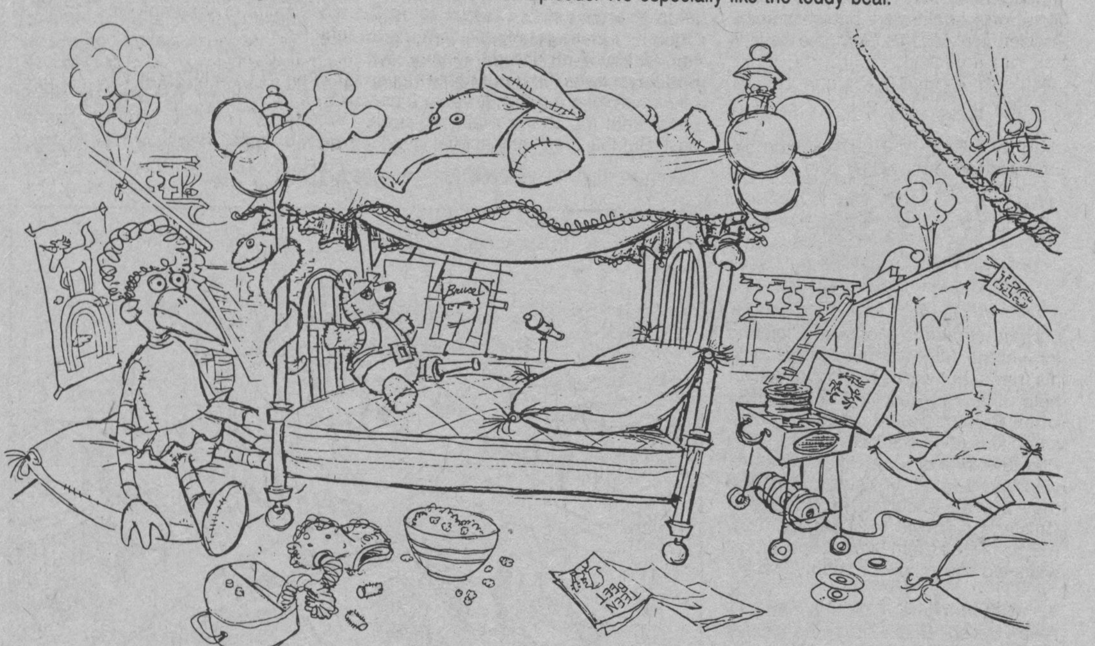
Marlon Brando in a shopping cart, from "Pirates With Dirty Faces."

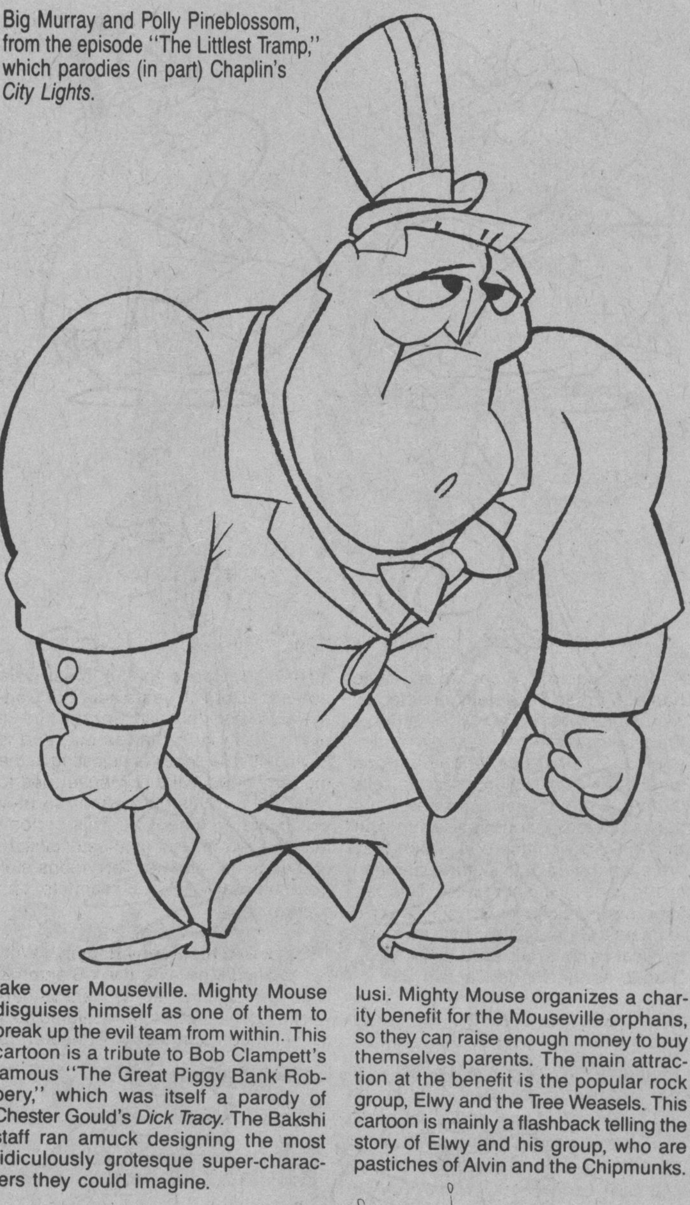
"Pirates With Dirty Faces." Written by Andrew Stanton, Rich Moore, Nate Kanfer & Eddie Fitzgerald; directed by Kent Butterworth. The Micefits (Moe, Frawley and Bub), pre-teen delinquents, play pirates and dig up a neighbor's yard. Mighty Mouse tells them that real pirates were nasty, but they scoff that it sounds like fun. But they have a nightmare in which they are shanghaied onto a pirate ship and forced to do all the hard work. This cartoon is a pastiche of Ronald Searle's animated Gilbert and Sullivan pirate musical, with a burlesque of Marlon Brando as the Pirate Captain.

"The Ice Goose Cometh." Written by Tom Minton; directed by John Kricfalusi. Gandy Goose and Sourpuss were popular actors 40 years ago. But Gandy was accidentally frozen into a glacier. Now he's thawed out, and is having culture-shock at adjusting to the modern world. Mighty Mouse tries to help him find his old partner so they can make a comeback. This cartoon features two Terrytoons theatrical stars of the 1940s. Another Terrytoons star from the early 1960s, Hashimoto, has a bit part.

"See You In the Funny Papers." Written by Rich Moore, Andrew Stanton & Nate Kanfer; directed by Kent Butterworth. Comic-book super-villains (lots of them) come to life and threaten to

A background sketch for the "Pirates" episode. We especially like the teddy bear.



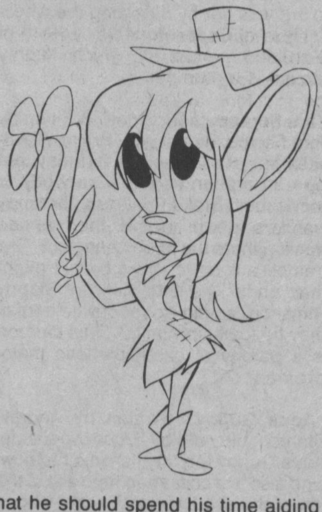


Big Murray and Polly Pineblossom, from the episode "The Littlest Tramp," which parodies (in part) Chaplin's *City Lights*.

take over Mouseville. Mighty Mouse disguises himself as one of them to break up the evil team from within. This cartoon is a tribute to Bob Clampett's famous "The Great Piggy Bank Robbery," which was itself a parody of Chester Gould's *Dick Tracy.* The Bakshi staff ran amuck designing the most ridiculously grotesque super-characters they could imagine.

"Mighty's Benefit Plan." Written by Jim Reardon; directed by John Kricfalusi. Mighty Mouse organizes a charity benefit for the Mouseville orphans, so they can raise enough money to buy themselves parents. The main attraction at the benefit is the popular rock group, Elwy and the Tree Weasels. This cartoon is mainly a flashback telling the story of Elwy and his group, who are pastiches of Alvin and the Chipmunks. (Coincidentally, the new Chipmunks show is being broadcast at the same time as *Mighty Mouse*: 9:30 Saturday morning.)

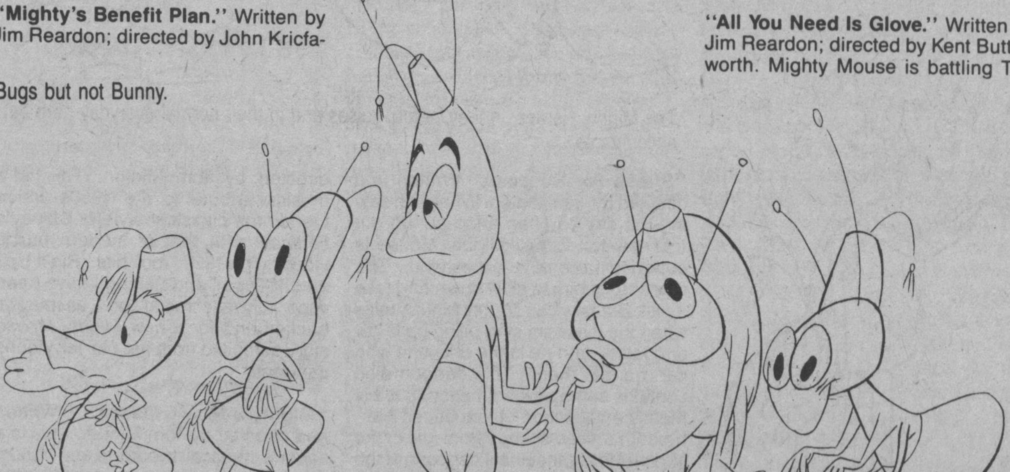
"The Littlest Tramp." Written by Tom Minton; directed by John Kricfalusi. Polly Pineblossom, a pure and innocent poor flower-girl (a parody of the flower-girl in Chaplin's *City Lights*), is tormented by Big Murray, a millionaire who likes sadistic practical jokes. Mighty Mouse is ready to mop up the floor with him, but Polly keeps insisting that he should spend his time aiding those "who are less fortunate than I."



"Heroes & Zeroes." Written by Andrew Stanton, Nate Kanfer, & Rich Moore; directed by Steve Gordon. Mighty Mouse gets involved with the Mighty Heroes (Ralph Bakshi's first cartoon creation, in 1966, which was also Terrytoons' final series before the studio closed in 1968). Strongman, Ropeman, Cuckooman, Tornadoman, and Diaperman are all 20 years older now, working together at an accounting firm. They decide to make a comeback, but their attempts to help Mighty Mouse after 20 years out of practice just foul everything up.

"All You Need Is Glove." Written by Jim Reardon; directed by Kent Butterworth. Mighty Mouse is battling The

Bugs but not Bunny.



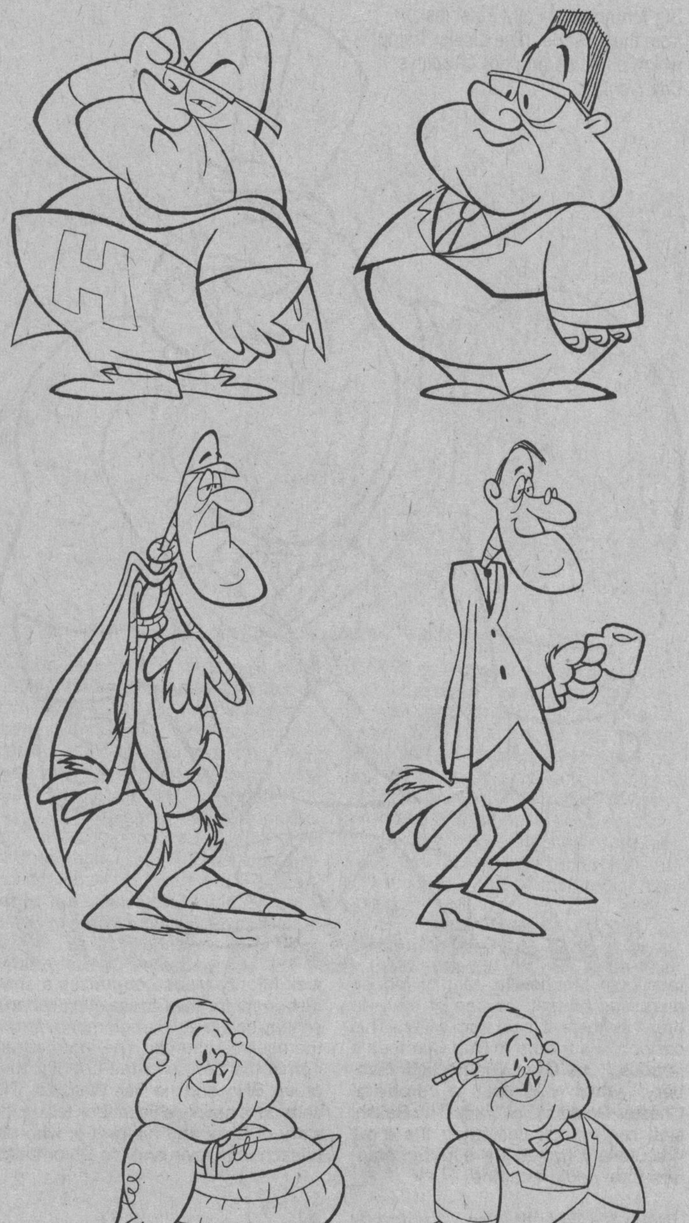
Glove, an arch-villain. MM learns that years ago, before The Glove turned to crime, he and his brother Lefty had been a vaudeville team, and that The Glove has been looking for Lefty ever since he disappeared. MM theorizes that if the two can be reunited, The Glove might give up his evil career. The search for Lefty takes MM to an Alaskan night-club.

"The League of Super-Rodents." Written by Doug Moench; directed by John Kricfalusi. The Cow has fallen in love with Madame Marsupial. He tries to impress her by defeating the whole League of Super-Rodents, a team of woodland heroes of which Mighty Mouse is a member.

"It's Scrappy's Birthday." Written by Tom Minton; directed by Bruce Woodside. Yes, it's Scrappy's birthday, but he's an orphan so there's nobody to remember. Broken-hearted, Scrappy wanders down toward the railroad tracks, where the hobos hang out. The tramps are so touched by his plight that, under the leadership of Slappy Rimshod, an old ex-vaudeville hoofer, they try to cheer him up. This cartoon is a parody of overly-pathetic melodramas.

"Aqua Guppy." Written by Andrew Stanton; directed by Bruce Woodside. Aqua Guppy is a tiny fish in a fishbowl who also is a costumed hero. He is the foe of the evil Captain A-crab, who is searching for his long-lost Pearl—and he thinks that Pearl Pureheart is it.

"Scrappy's Playhouse." Written and directed by Tom Minton. Scrappy and the Micefits are up to mischief. They sneak into a movie theater's projection room, and make their own movie by cutting and splicing old films together, until an usher finds them and chases them out. This cartoon has some new animation, but it is mostly the movie that Scrappy and his pals make, which is a compilation of old Terrytoons *Mighty Mouse* footage.

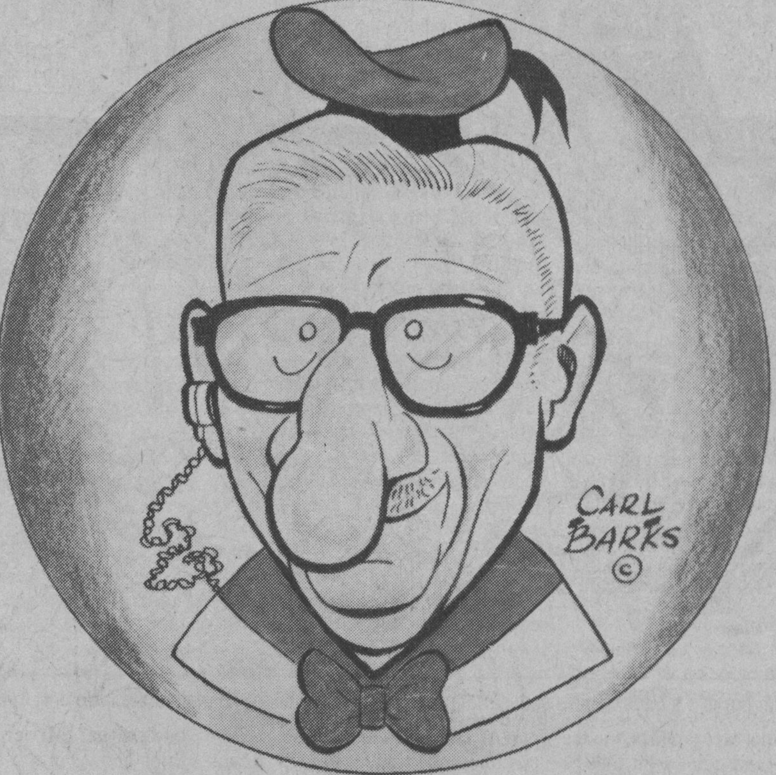


The Mighty Heroes, in their heroic guises and in their normal everyday garb as accountants.

"Stress For Success." Written and directed by Tom Minton. What with saving the day so often and figuring out the new tax forms, Mighty Mouse is suffering from severe overwork. The doctor tells him to slow down and take a rest. But how can Mighty Mouse relax when the disasters start piling up faster and faster, and he is the only one who can handle them? This cartoon also contains some new animation, but it is mostly a collection of fast-paced hairbreadth rescue scenes from lots of the *Mighty Mouse* theatrical cartoons of the 1940s and 1950s.

"Animation Concerto." Written and directed by Tom Minton. This is a musical tribute to the 1950s which blends the classical style of Disney's *Fantasia* with that of modern music videos. The 1950s rock hits "Rip It Up" and "Slippin' and Sliding" have been especially rescored to serve as musical background for a new *Mighty Mouse* story compiled from the old Terrytoons cartoons.

"Mighty's Music Classics." Written and directed by Tom Minton. This is a second musical tribute to the 1950s. The featured rock hits (rescored for the new cartoon story) are "Why Do Fools Fall in Love" and "Locomotion." ●



Only A Poor Old Duck Man

DOC'S Bookshelf

by Dwight R. Decker

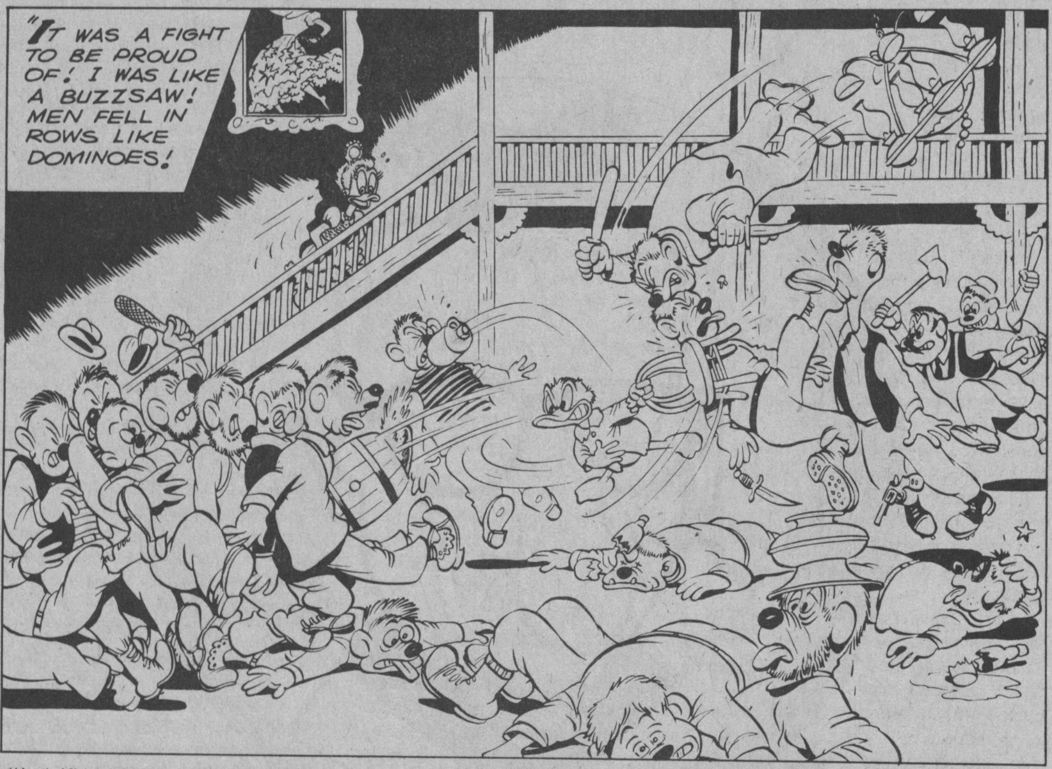
Was Carl Barks "one of the few real artists to have worked in the comic-strip medium?" Michael Barrier's book, *Carl Barks and the Art of the Comic Book,* published by M. Lilien in 1981, not only makes that claim but goes a long way towards proving it.

"I was a duck man—strictly a duck man." Carl Barks said that about his tenure working on stories for Donald Duck cartoons at Disney during the late '30s and early '40s, but it could apply to his comic-book career from late 1942 onwards. A shy and modest man by nature, he has always seemed half embarrassed, half exasperated by the fan attention and adulation lavished on him and his work since the '60s. His stories were unsigned and his publisher never forwarded fan mail; he had no idea of the effect his work had until a determined fan tracked him down in 1960. Even then, he was at first convinced that the laudatory fan letter was a fellow artist's practical joke. Since then, he has come to an acceptance of the fuss being made about him, but he still appears just a little astonished by it and perhaps not quite sure what to make of it all. It was left to the fans to make something out of a most remarkable career, and one of the results is Barrier's generally splendid book.

Carl Barks and the Art of the Comic Book was originally published in hardcover six years ago at some outrageous price that left me gasping. The reason why I'm reviewing it now and not then is because a softcover edition just turned up at the local comics shop. I wouldn't say its hefty $20 price tag is exactly a popular price, either, but at least now it's manageable for the Barks fan who wants the book.

No, scratch that. The Barks fan *needs* this book. It isn't for nothing that Mike Barrier has been called "Barks's Boswell," as he has been studying Barks and his work since the mid-'60s. The present book began as a fanzine essay called "The Lord of Quackly Hall," published in 1967, and went through considerable evolution and elaboration in the following years as further information came to light. Barrier corresponded with Barks about his stories and interviewed him and other people involved with Disney cartoons and comic books, turning up innumerable nuggets of facts and insight along the way. A condensed version appeared as an essay called "The Duck Man" in Don Thompson and Dick Lupoff's *The Comic-Book Book* (1974), but this is probably Barrier's final word on the subject after over a dozen years of living with it. "The Lord of Quackly Hall" has been expanded to some 11 chapters and 87 pages, combining as detailed a biography of Barks the man as you're likely to see with a thoughtful critical analysis of his work.

The rest of the book is given over to an annotated bibliography listing


"IT WAS A FIGHT TO BE PROUD OF! I WAS LIKE A BUZZSAW! MEN FELL IN ROWS LIKE DOMINOES!

"Jack Kirby with ducks": a classic Barks scene (from "Back to the Klondike") heretofore available only in Barrier's fine book.

everything Barks ever published in the comics field (and quite a bit that he *didn't* publish, as every known piece of art cut from his stories by his editors is traced and described as well), along with Barks's own comments about the whys and wherefores of how many stories came to be. Now that Gladstone Comics is publishing Barks's stories in an affordable format, Barrier's book is indispensable for the fan who both wants to know more and to keep track of the stories as they're reprinted (Gladstone being a little shy on publication data).

Barrier's book is finished off with an ample amount of illustrations to illuminate points made in the text. Barks's pre-Disney career is as well documented as anyone would want (it's hard to believe this lukewarm stuff is what got Grandpa hot and bothered behind the barn back in the Despression), and Barks himself supplied some family and personal photographs to make his biography a little easier for the reader to visualize. Sketches showing how his fellow staffers at Disney saw Barks are there, along with the necessary panel, page, and cover reproductions from his comic-book work. Perhaps the most outstanding example of editorial ingenuity in the book is how Barrier resurrects a cover drawn for the November, 1949 issue of *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* that was never used and is now apparently lost. A much-reduced stat of that cover was, however, printed as part of a house ad of the time, so Barrier blows the tiny reproduction back up to full-page size, and the result is surprisingly legible. Other examples of unpublished work are on hand, as well, like the "Jack Kirby with ducks" barroom brawl scene excised from "Back to the Klondike" (*Uncle Scrooge* #456) "because of violence and (the) dance-hall atmosphere," according to Barks. Since Gladstone is publishing a restored version of "Back to the Klondike," Barrier's book won't be quite the must-have item for the collector who wants to take a look at that scene, but the commentary is still invaluable.

One noteworthy thing is that *Carl Barks and the Art of the Comic Book* was apparently done with full cooperation of the Disney organization. For Barrier's essay in *The Comic-Book Book* back in 1974, Disney refused permission to reprint any of Barks's work featuring their characters, and all that was published there was a single cartoon by Barks showing his life since his retirement (drawing a picture of a naked girl using a duck as a model). The present volume is loaded with Disney art, however, and Barrier thanks David Smith of the Disney Archive for allowing him to examine Barks's correspondence on file there. Clearly there have been some changes in Burbank.

What kind of man would devote a good chunk of his adult life to chronicling the life and times of a comic-book artist? Barrier doesn't say anything about himself in his own book, but the introduction to his chapter in *The Comic-Book Book* describes him as "a newspaper columnist for the *Arkansas Gazette,* writing on government and politics, and a former assistant to the Arkansas attorney general." That was as of 1974, anyway, as he now lives in Virginia.

Barrier's book does have a few flaws. While lavishly produced and printed on the thickest, glossiest paper stock you can imagine, the typesetting is sloppy and more than a few typographical errors slipped by the proofreader. While the large 8½ x 11 page size and the high-class paper certainly helped the quality of the art reproduction, probably the main consideration in a book like this, the resultant astronomical price is unfortunate. The hardcover was priced just plain beyond the reach of a lot of us, and even the softcover at $20 requires some thought before reaching for the wallet.

But as an introduction of undreamed-of information and insight for the long-time Barks buff, the book is worth every last penny of that 20. The ultra-complete bibliography alone justifies the book's purchase.

Duck Man's Tales: Carl Barks created $crooge McDuck for the comic books in 1946, though the character had to evlove over time and many stories. The character probably reached full flower in 1952 with the publication of the book-length story, "Only a Poor Old Man," in *Uncle $crooge* #356. (The numbering scheme is that of Dell Comics' series of one-shots, but for all practical purposes it's *Uncle $crooge* #1. The regular series began after three such odd-numbered one-shots with #4.) In the meantime, $crooge never appeared in any of Disney's animated cartoons, which seems a little strange since he was such a popular character. The studio may have just ignored what was going on in the comic books, or a "Not Invented Here" mentality might have prevailed and characters created outside the studio confines were not considered worthy, or else $crooge McDuck may have simply come along too late as Disney's declining production of theatrical shorts finally ground to a halt in the mid-'50s when cartoons had become too expensive to continue producing.

One of the surprising revelations of the Barrier book is that the Disney studio was at least considering an Uncle $crooge cartoon in 1955 and Barks himself submitted a script for it. Unfortunately, that was when the short-subject units were in the process of being closed down and the cartoon was never made.

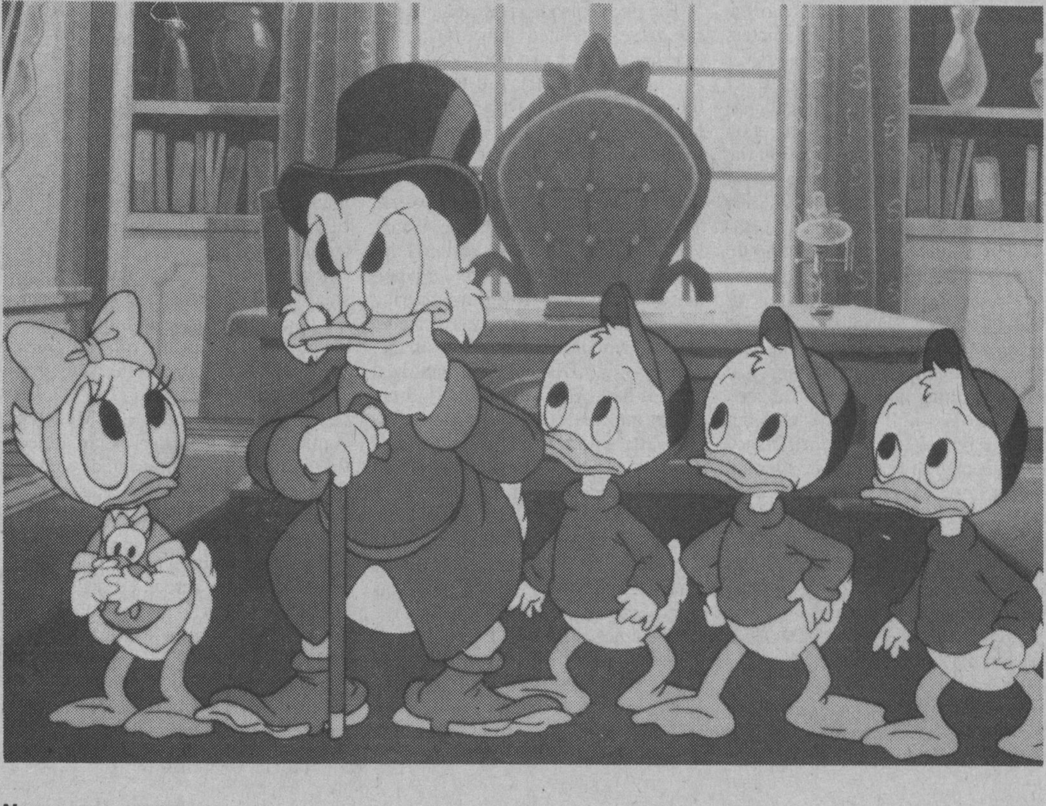
$crooge McDuck was of course the star of an enormously popular comic book during the '50s and the studio couldn't completely ignore him, but an appearance of a few seconds in the animated titles for the *Mickey Mouse Club* show was as far as he got until 1967. That was the year Disney released a double-length cartoon called *Scrooge McDuck and Money.* I've never seen it myself, but the descriptions I've read make it sound relentlessly educational: $crooge teaches Huey, Dewey, and Louie the principles of economics. It does make sense. If a Disney character *had* to lecture on what has been aptly called "the dismal science," who better than $crooge McDuck? Barrier calls it "a dreary cartoon," but then economics is not one of your more entertaining subjects. Stills from the cartoon show that the dreariness was not helped at all by the all-too typical Disney Xeroxed pencil animation of the period. Even so, it was $crooge's first extended appearance on the screen. His voice was supplied by Bill Thompson of Droopy-cartoon fame, described by Barrier as "a standard old-man voice with a slight Scottish accent."

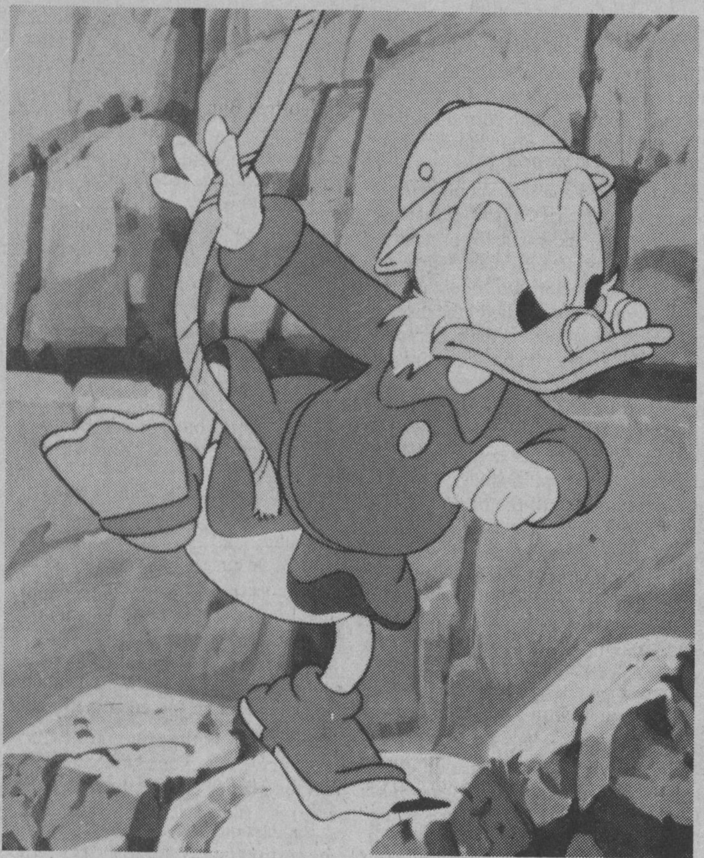
$crooge owed his next major role to Alan Young (yes, that Alan Young—the one who played second banana to a talking horse on the *Mr. Ed* show). Young, along with his partner, Alan Dinehart, wrote a comedy version of Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* using Disney characters in the starring roles, which originally appeared as a children's record. That record was the basis of 1983's *Mickey's Christmas Carol*, a half-hour animated featurette starring Disney characters that hadn't been used in decades. Mickey Mouse as Bob Cratchit may have been the nominal star because of his name-recognition value, but it was $crooge McDuck in the role he was born to play, as Ebeneezer Scrooge, who stole the show. This time his Scottish-accented voice was provided by Alan Young, who actually grew up in Scotland and had to work to get rid of his Scottish accent when he came to the United States. (The next time the 1960 George Pal version of *The Time Machine* turns up on TV, look for Young playing Rod Taylor's best friend with a pretty outrageous Scottish accent—and the friend's son without the accent).

Mickey's Christmas Carol may have got someone thinking, both about the viability of new cartoons with Disney characters in general and about $crooge McDuck in particular. September, 1987 saw the debut of *Duck Tales*: 65 syndicated episodes of an animated TV adventures series starring that selfsame miserly old duck, with Alan Young back doing the voice.

Duck Tales is the triumph of Carl Barks's concept. The characters who built the Disney empire through their cartoons, like Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, were increasingly ignored after World War II. Walt was too busy conquering new territory with animated features first, then live-

The cast of *Duck Tales*: Uncle $crooge, the nephews, and. . .Webigail?





It's a gorgeous-looking show, and faithful to Carls Barks's original stories.

action movies and theme parks. After the cartoons went out of production altogether in 1955, it was left to the comic books to keep the characters alive and in the public eye. Walt never sold his cartoons wholesale to TV the way Warner Brothers did: instead, the cartoons were stingily parceled out on his own regular TV show and on the *Mickey Mouse Club,* and run one at a time in the theaters with whatever new movie was current from the studio. For a lot of us kids growing up in the '50s and '60s, the comic books were our *only* exposure to most of the Disney stable. Without the comic books, Disney characters would have been about the same as Krazy Kat was: something our parents had seen years ago and still remembered but completely unknown to us. Disney never seemed to realize the potential of what it was sitting on and was content to merely rerun the same old cartoons now and then. Meanwhile, Carl Barks took the same characters and developed them in the comic books, and made them get up and sing. He not only created $crooge McDuck but pioneered a whole genre of comedy-adventure stories for $crooge McDuck to operate in. With *Duck Tales*, the whole thing has come full circle, as everything about the show is Barks's work and ideas faithfully translated to the screen.

The pilot episode consisted of several loosely related adventures tied together into one two-hour TV-movie. As such, it's the first full-length feature using the major Disney characters ever made, discounting compilations where they appeared in individual segments. By an odd coincidence, Carl Barks's first comic-book work, "Donald Duck Finds Pirate Gold" (published in 1942 and recently reprinted by Gladstone), was an adaptation of a proposed feature starring the studio biggies that was scripted and storyboarded but never made. Like I said, Disney never realized what it had. You can probably think of any number of woefully weak features the studio made in later years when it could have made *Pirate Gold* or just about anything else with Donald or Mickey. The astonishing part is that it took until 1987 for something like *Duck Tales* to reach the screen—and that it's based on things Barks was doing in 1952.

And since it *is* 1987, a few signs of the times were evident in that first *Duck Tales.* For one, the animation wasn't even done in this country but was instead farmed out to Japan. It's a gorgeous-looking show, but the American animation industry and the Disney organization specifically weren't able to produce 65 episodes of such quality at an affordable price in such a short time-frame (it normally takes Disney several years to do one feature, and this much animation is equal to a dozen or more features). It's not a hopeful commentary about the state of American animation. Then somebody had the brilliant idea of phasing out Donald from the show and leaving $crooge and the three nephews, while introducing three new major characters that can best be described as weak and uninspired. An accident-prone test pilot named Launchpad McQuack shows some promise, but the nanny and her granddaughter Webigail just seem like someone's effort to arbitrarily add female characters to the cast. Come to think of it, Barks's stories were pretty much an all-male affair, but Webigail and her grandmother aren't the best answer to the problem and in the actual stories tend to be more annoying than interesting.

But beyond that, *Duck Tales* is the Barksian premise of fabulously wealthy $crooge McDuck taking his nephews on fantastic adventures around the globe, faithfully translated to animation about as well as can be expected. Not only does the show use Barks creations like $crooge and Gyro Gearloose, not to mention Flintheart Glomgold (who's depicted as Scottish here rather than South African, the times being what they are), but the dialogue even quotes Barks lines directly. When $crooge swims through his three cubic acres of money, his words are straight out of "Only a Poor Old Man:" "I like to dive around in my money like a porpoise! And burrow through it like a gopher! And toss it up and let it hit me on the head!" When $crooge explains to his nephews how he got to be rich, the words are again Barks's from the same story: "I made it by being tougher than the toughies and smarter than the smarties! And I made it square!" Interviewed by the Associated Press about his role on *Duck Tales,* Alan Young remarked that "many of the stories for *Duck Tales* came from the Scrooge McDuck comic books," and the article added that Young "was presented with a three-volume collection by a fan when he was in San Francisco recently to do a commercial."

It would have been nice if Barks had received a little screen credit for his contribution, but so far as I could tell, the two-hour TV-movie didn't list him at all.

There was a slight problem in how Donald Duck's voice was handled, however. Donald talks the way he does because he's supposed to be a duck.

Daisy started out talking the same way, though in later cartoons she went to a straightforward voice, while the nephews still talk in the quack voices. Barks always treated his characters as people who for commercial reasons had to be drawn to look like ducks (the title of that $crooge story isn't "Only a Poor Old Duck," after all), and in the silence of a comic-book page, no attempt was made to convey the idea that Donald spoke in any way other than in a slangy, colloquial tone. But after 50 years of Clarence Nash doing Donald in a duck voice, it's permanently associated with the character, and the effect is jarring when other duck characters don't talk that way. It was startling enough in *Mickey's Christmas Carol* when $crooge's Scottish accent was contrasted with Donald's duck voice, but *Duck Tales* takes it so far that normally speaking duck characters complain that they can't understand Donald. Does this mean that "Ducky" Nash spent half a century doing the voice of a duck with a speech defect? For what it's worth, Barks's notes on that proposed cartoon back in 1955 called for $crooge to go berserk at one point and start "spouting duck talk."

But even if his name isn't on *Duck Tales,* the presence of Carl Barks is felt all the way through as the show is a remarkably accurate transplantation of the spirit of his comic books to the screen. The backgrounds are gorgeous, the animation is fluid, the characters *look* like they should . . . *Duck Tales* could have been worse, a lot worse.

The Ducks After Barks: Back in the summer of 1979, I went off to Europe for a vacation via Icelandic Airlines, which at the time was the cheapest way to get there. The slight hitch, besides a layover in Reykjavik to change planes, was that the only European airport Icelandic flew into was Luxembourg. I stopped in a shop there and picked up an issue of the weekly Dutch *Donald Duck* comic book for something to read on the plane home.

The lead story was an original European production, and not an American reprint though drawn in a kind of new-Barks style. The plot had to do with Donald's favorite comic-book hero, *Snavelman* ("Beak-Man," more or less). *Snavelman: the Movie* was just opening (the first Superman movie was current in Europe about that time) and Donald wanted to go see it, but he was tripped up by lack of funds, his nephews, and a do-gooding crusader against comic books. It was a striking story, if only because of the self-referential comic-book gags, and it stuck with me.

Two years later, in the summer of 1981, I was back in Europe, this time in Denmark, and Kim Thompson and I were visiting the Copenhagen studio of Freddy Milton, who has drawn a lot of the Euro-Disney strips. I remembered the "Snavelman" story and commented that it had looked a lot like Milton's work, and Milton was left a little astonished that someone had seen something of his and recognized it. Thinking about it now, I suspect I just made a lucky guess at the time, as it turned out he had collaborated with Dutch artist Daan Jippes on that story and the final product wasn't at all like pure, uncut Milton.

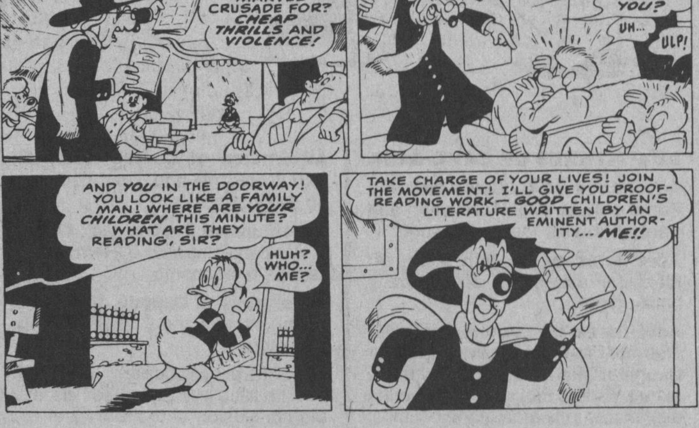
In the last couple of years, Gladstone has been reprinting quite a few European-produced Disney stories along with Barks and other American classics, and as it happens, that "Snavelman" story was recently translated into English and run in *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* #518. With all the ruckus lately about rating systems, editorial guidelines, and possible censorship of comics, the story is such a parody of anti-comics crusaders that it's certainly timely.

It begins with the remark that "Some folks just have to tell everyone how to run their lives," and shows Donald getting mixed up with one Dr. Primly Allworth, an earnest guardian of the public morals whose thundering proclamation that "A comic book in the house is a *serpent* in your garden!" is sure to endear him to most readers of *Amazing Heroes*. Dr. Allworth's answer to the comic-book menace is his own line of uplifting children's books and he hires Donald as a proofreader. Donald takes the job because he needs money—he wanted to see *Super Snooper: the Movie* but couldn't buy a ticket because, "Uh oh! I'm ninety-five cents short! Ninety-five cents that I spent on the new Super Snooper comic!" Obviously, there's a conflict of interests between the employee and his boss.

Geoffrey Blum is credited as scripter, but most of the European stories are already written in English to begin with and his job seems to have been mainly elaborating on an elemental script, along with changing things like "Snavelman" to a more American-sounding Super Snooper. He earned his page rate, too, as comparing the Dutch and English versions shows. In Dutch, the quotations from Dr. Allworth's ghastly children's books are left at: " 'The Bunny Who Wouldn't Eat His Carrots.' Once upon a time there was a little bunny. . ." Blum's rendition rhymes: "So eat your dinner, bunnykin, or you will wind up weak and thin." It sounds bad enough in Dutch, but in English, Dr. Allworth's inspirational tales of Perky Pup and Buster Bunny are positively appalling. Blum even rounds out Allworth's character with a delightfully fatuous joke that isn't in the Dutch story: the good doctor visits Donald's house and when served something to drink, he smilingly tells one of Donald's nephews, "Next to morality, I like a *cuppa*-tea! That's a little joke, son!"

It's a good story, probably one of the best of the European Disney strips Gladstone has run, and makes its biting point amusingly, without being as heavy-handed as it could have been. Even Dr. Allworth, while obviously foolish and fanatical, isn't quite a complete villain, and is presented as sincere in his own way. Interestingly, Don Rosa has picked up on Super Snooper as Donald's favorite comic-book character for his own Duck stories since then. ●

A scene from Daan Jippes and Freddy Milton's "Super Snooper" story (*Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* #518), in which the European duo takes on would-be comic-book censors and pokes fun of super-heroes at the same time.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WHILE YOU TURN A BLIND EYE TO THIS TRASH, INNOCENT HEARTS ARE BEING CORRUPTED! WHO AMONG YOU CAN CLAIM A CLEAN CONSCIENCE?
YOU THERE?
OR YOU?
UH...
ULP!
AND YOU IN THE DOORWAY! YOU LOOK LIKE A FAMILY MAN! WHERE ARE YOUR CHILDREN THIS MINUTE? WHAT ARE THEY READING, SIR?
HUH? WHO... ME?
TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR LIVES! JOIN THE MOVEMENT! I'LL GIVE YOU PROOF-READING WORK— GOOD CHILDREN'S LITERATURE WRITTEN BY AN EMINENT AUTHORITY... ME!!

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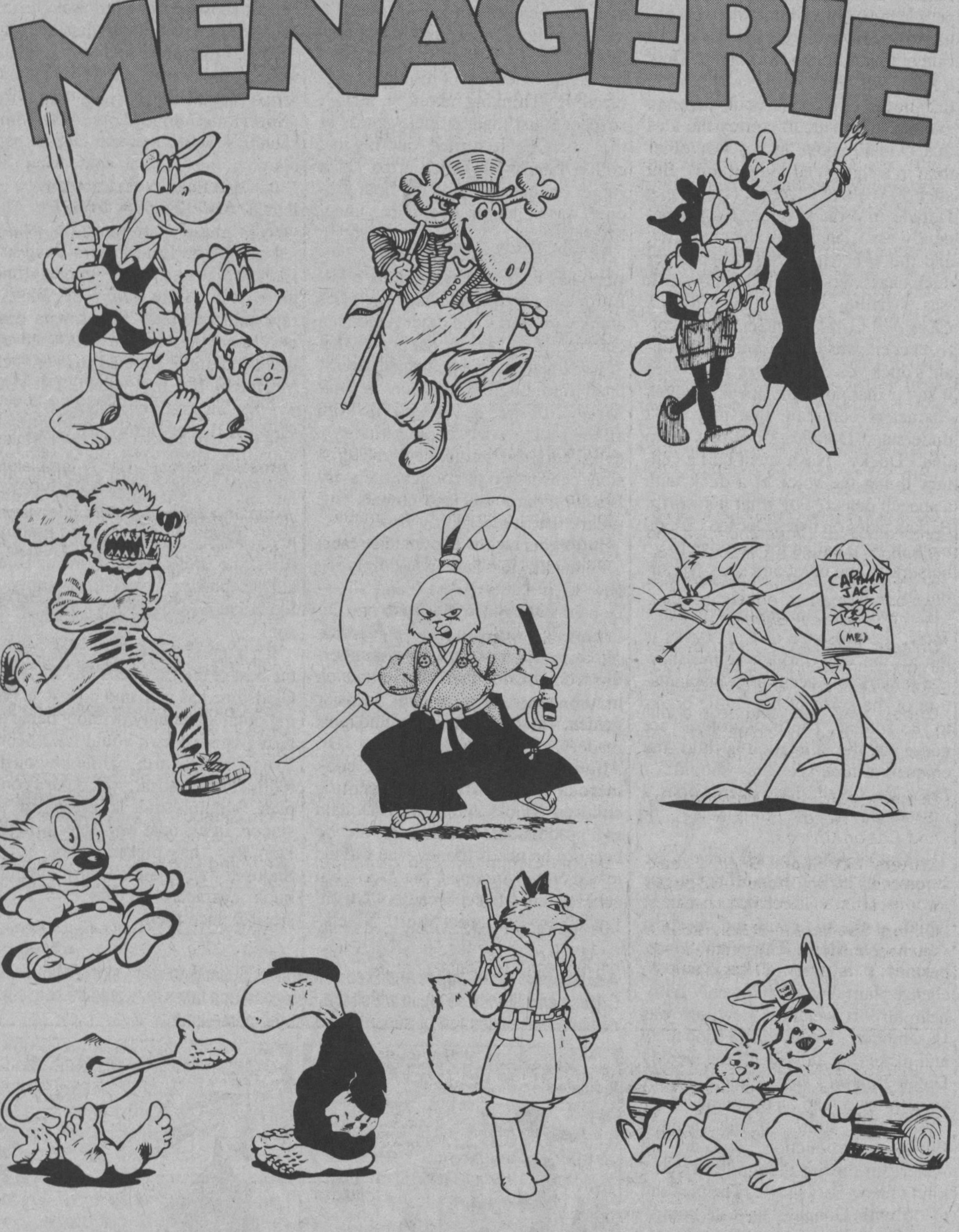

ADVENTURES OF CAPT. JACK

Adventures of Captain Jack #3: Part 2 of "Sat. Night": Herman and Beezlebub visit the netherworld.

Adventures of Captain Jack #4: Maniacal astronauts and a batty back-up strip.

Adventures of Captain Jack #5: "Farmer Fred, I'm In Love With Your Daughter" Part 1: Arrival on Janet's planet. (This is the one that drove the distributors nuts around the country.)

Adventures of Captain Jack #6: Part 2: Herman and Janet decide to go away together.

Adventures of Captain Jack #7: Part 3: Beezlebub intrudes in Herman and Janet's relationship.

Adventures of Captain Jack #8: A daring escape, the Captain in drag, and more.

Adventures of Captain Jack #9: Pool hustling with Saturated Fats, and the conclusion of the storyline!

CRITTERS

Critters #4: *Gnuff* and *Birthright* continue, *Lionheart* premieres, and the first Ken Macklin cover painting!

Critters #5: *Birthright* continues, the first *Gnuff* novel concludes (with a cover), plus Stan Sakai's *Nilson Groundthumper*!

Critters #6: *Usagi Yojimbo* tale with cover, *Birthright* concludes, and the first *Firecracker Jack* by Mark Armstrong!

COPYRIGHT © RESPECTIVE ARTISTS: Freddy Milton, Bob Foster, Reed Waller and Kate Worley, Steve Lafler, Stan Sakai, Mike Kazaleh, Milton Knight, Sam Kleth, Steven A. Gallacci, Ty Templeton

Critters #8: *Jack Bunny* by cover artist Mark Armstrong, Templeton Kelly tribute, and *Lionheart* begins.

Critters #9: Hallowe'en issue with Gnuff behind a mask, Lionheart's nightmare, and Dog Boy.

Critters #10: *Usagi Yojimbo* cover and story, plus the continuations of *Gnuff* and *Lionheart*.

Critters #11: Special Christmas issue, featuring the conclusions of *Usagi Yojimbo*, *Gnuff*, and *Lionheart*, plus work by Mike Kazaleh, J. Holland and Ron Wilber, Mark Armstrong, Ty Templeton, Sam Kieth, Steve Lafler, and Ken Macklin. 68 pages!

Critters #12: *Birthright* returns, with a cover by Gallacci, plus Reed Waller and Kate Worley, and Sam Kieth!

Critters #13: *Gnuff* cover and 16-page chapter, plus *Birthright*, *Surfin' Neanderthals* by Mark Armstrong.

Critters #14: *Usagi Yojimbo* story and cover, plus *Birthright* and *Gnuff* continue.

Critters #15: *The Blue Beagle* and *Fission Chicken* both debut, and *Birthright* races on!

Critters #16: The conclusion to *Gnuff*, another *Nilson Groundthumper*, and *Birthright* reaches a climax.

Critters #17: *Lionheart* returns in a two-part Canadian adventure, plus the conclusion of *Birthright*.

Critters #18: *Leggo Lamb* by Jim Engel premieres. Also, the conclusion to *Lionheart*, and *Blue Beagle*.

Critters #19: *Gnuff* returns in a tale of nature gone wild, plus *Sam and Max, Freelance Police*, *Dragons*, and *Fission Chicken*.

Critters #20: *Speakingstone* by Waller and Worley returns, plus *Gnuff* and *Fission Chicken*.

Critters #21: More *Gnuff*, *Speakingstone*, *Fission Chicken*—32 pages worth—plus a Sam Kieth cover!

Critters Special #1—Nilson Groundthumper and Hermy: Both the *Albedo* stories, plus a new 10-page strip!

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Dog Boy #3: Dog Boy shows how to publish your own comic book.

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Dog Boy #5: An experiment misfires, and Dog Boy and Benb combine to form . . . Dogb! Oh no!

Dog Boy #6: "Drinkin' Man's Blues," with a striking painted cover.

Dog Boy #7: He be Doog Boog. Jazzy issue exploring Dog Boy's multiple personalities!

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USAGI YOJIMBO

Usagi Yojimbo #1 *(2nd printing)*: Usagi journeys tells how he became a samurai. Plus: Dennis Fujitake!

Usagi Yojimbo #2: Usagi goes into training and has his first duel. Plus: A new strip by Dave Thorne.

Usagi Yojimbo #3: The continuation of "Samurai," and a "Croakers" strip by Don Dougherty.

Usagi Yojimbo #4: The conclusion to Usagi's origin, and the first half of a penguin strip by Gary Kato.

Usagi Yojimbo #5: A one-issue tale of silk, treachery, and greed, and the end of the penguin tale by Kato.

Usagi Yojimbo #6: Usagi battles a water elemental, plus "Digger Duckbill" by Shaw and Evanier.

BOOKS, MAGAZINES, AND OTHER STUFF

Usagi Yojimbo Book One: Every *Usagi Yojimbo* story before *Usagi* #1 collected in one handy 160-page volume, with a new Stan Sakai cover.

Amazing Heroes #9: Behind the scenes of DC's *Captain Carrot* comic with Scott Shaw! and Roy Thomas.

Amazing Heroes #42: Funny-animal issue with Joshua Quagmire cover and interview. Plus: Arn Saba on Neil the Horse and Dave Sim on Cerebus!

Amazing Heroes #111: Ty Templeton (of *Critters*) interviewed. It's funny.

Amazing Heroes #129: Interviews with Steven A. Gallacci and Freddy Milton, "Why I Draw Funny Animals" by various, plus more!

The Comics Journal #73: Carl Barks featured, with long retrospective.

The Comics Journal #82-83: Mammoth interview with Dave (*Cerebus the Aardvark*) Sim.

The Comics Journal #99: Long interview with Arn (*Neil the Horse*) Saba.

Anything Goes! #3: Featuring a full-color Captain Jack story by Mike Kazaleh, Cerebus vignette by Dave Sim, and Cerebus cover by Neal Adams.

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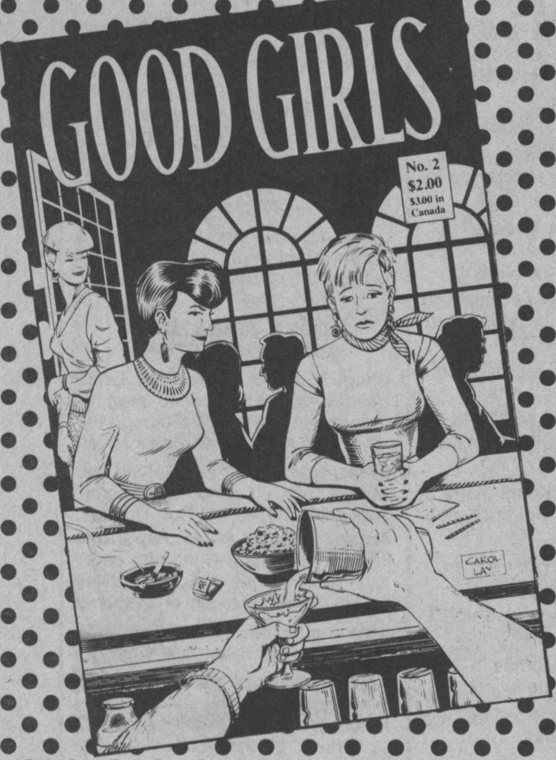
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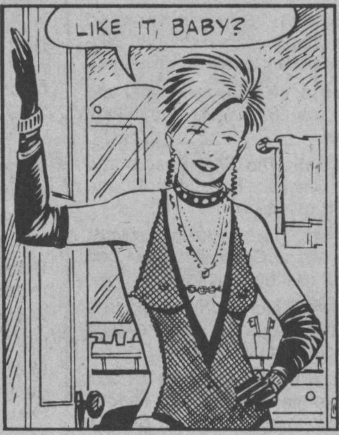
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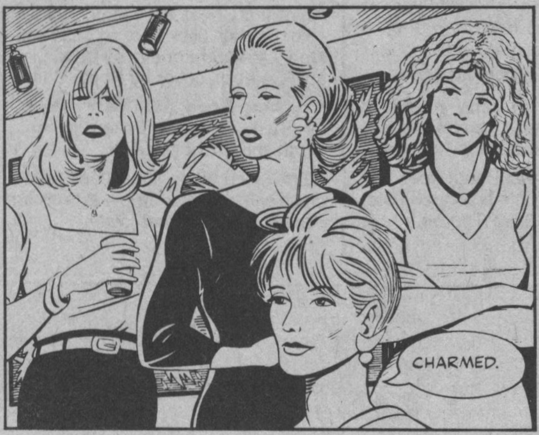
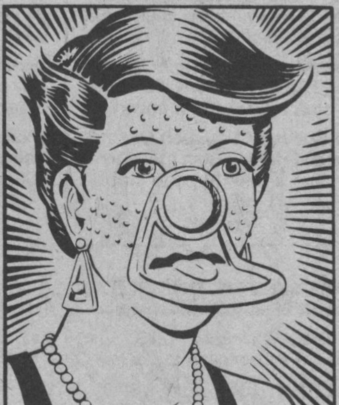
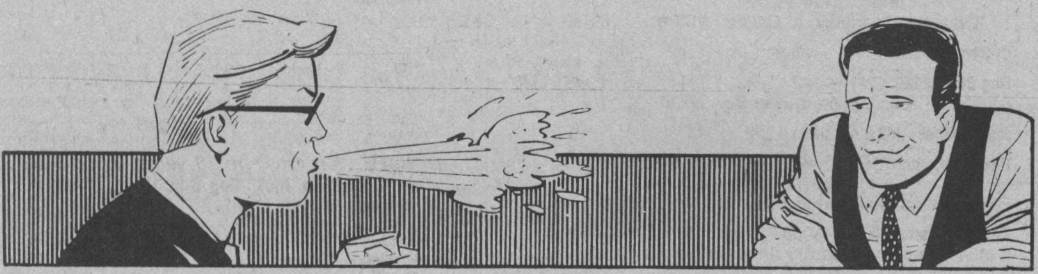
SHE KNOWS A LOT OF FABULOUS BABES. . .



. . .AND SHE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THIS.





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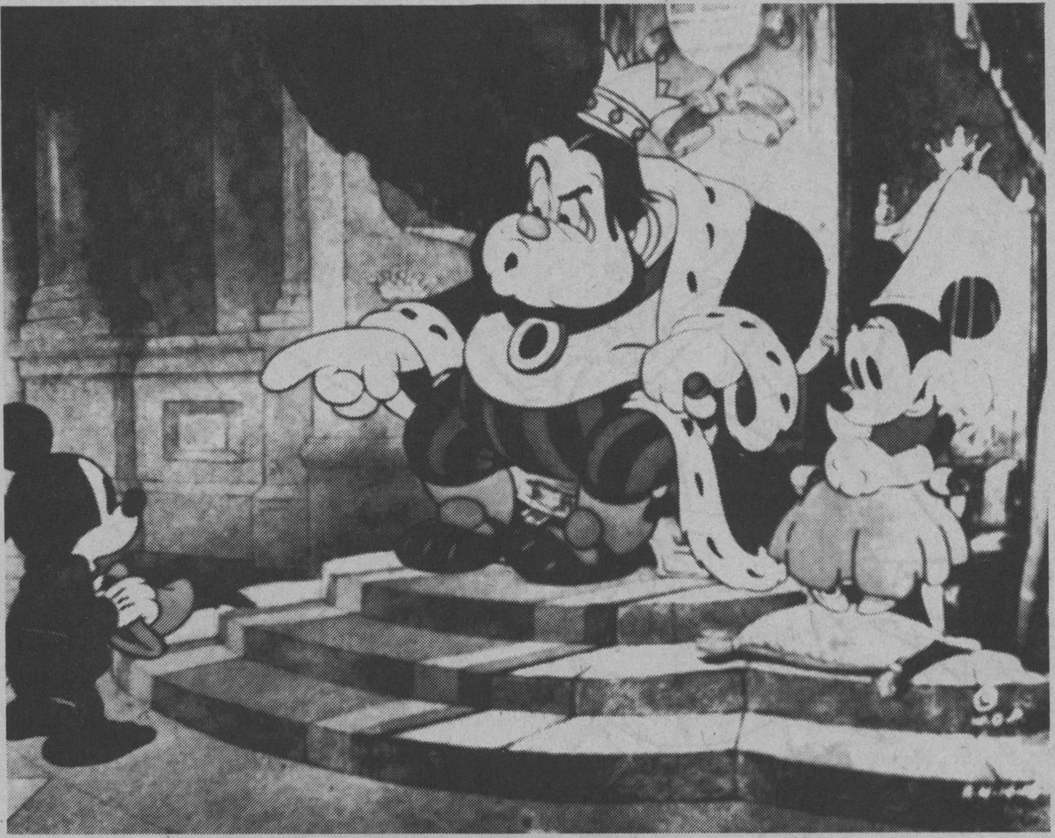


Overture!
Hit The Rewind Button!

VIDEO
views

by Michael Eury

It's somewhat belitting for animation fans forced to scour *children*'s video releases just to find vintage cartoons. After all, seeing the work of Chuck Jones and Walt Disney displayed on a shelf next to Rainbow Brite and Thundercats is insulting, but then again, until we form a cartoon cabal that indoctrinates the average neophyte in the art of classic animation, we'll simply have to live with these annoyances. At least these old favorites are available.

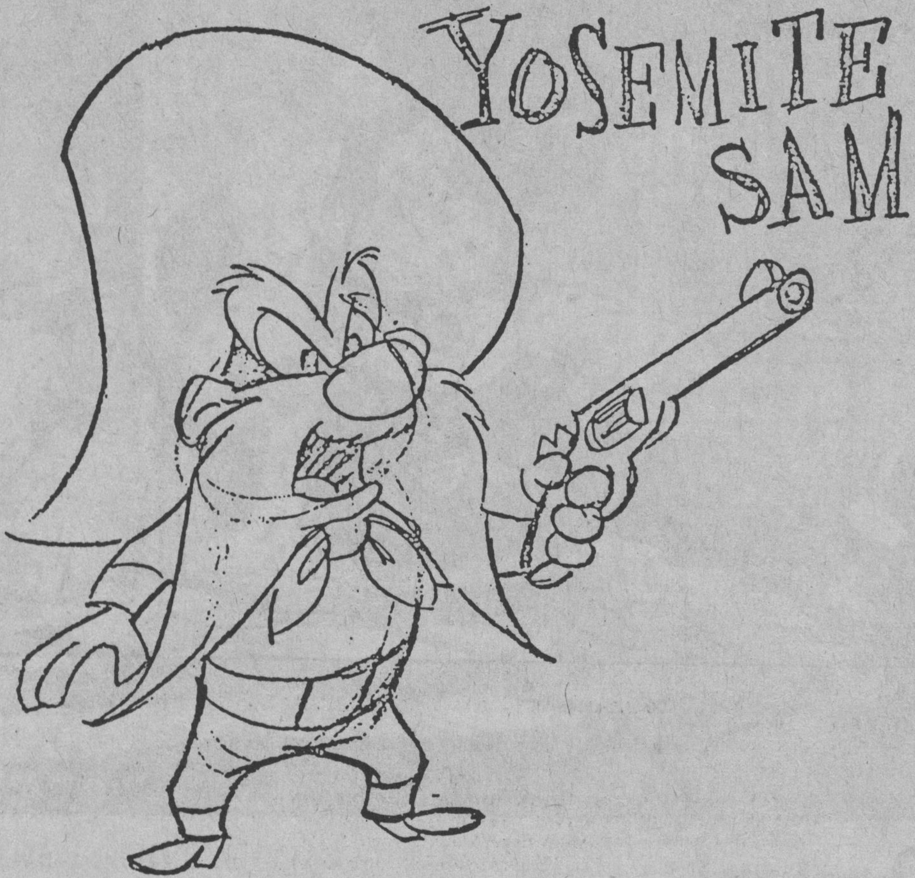
And available they are! Videocassette companies continue to release the best of Mickey Mouse, Felix the Cat, Porky Pig, and a host of other funny animal favorites at an alarming rate, with most titles issues at very nominal prices. This edition of "Comics on Video" will examine a trio of cassettes that headline not only some of cartoon's most reknowned characters, but also the craftsmanship of a few of the finest animators to ever grace the field.

MORE OF DISNEY'S BEST 1932-1946 (Walt Disney Cartoon Classics, Vol. 7), Walt Disney Home Video, 50 min., $49.95.

Leonard Maltin, in his invaluable history of American cartoons titled *Of Mice and Magic*, assesses the contributions of Walt Disney to animation thusly: "He did not invent the medium, but one could say that he *defined* it." *More of Disney's Best 1932-1946* proves that point, providing a well-rounded glimpse of the enchanting work of Disney. The videocassette showcases a half-dozen shorts that have carved a niche in the annals of animation, plus earned either Academy Award nominations or Oscars themselves.

The package opens with "The Three Little Pigs," winner of the 1933 Academy Award for "Best Cartoon Short Subject." Disney boasted an uncanny knack for making memorable film classics out of nursery rhymes and children's stories; in fact, many people assume that Walt Disney created *Pinocchio*, *Snow White*, and a host of others. "The Three Little Pigs" is no exception to this assumption, as its unforgettable tune "Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" is remembered by more folks than the tale's famous line of "not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin." Through this cartoon, the Disney studios began to explore the raw potential of animation by utilizing a cleverly choreographed blend of action and music. The story also teaches a valuable moral: "work and play don't mix"—or at least that's what the pig with the brick house says.

Mickey Mouse is next up in the



"Why, y'long-eared galoot. . ." A character sketch of Friz Freleng's Yosemite Sam, amply on display in his "Salute."

1938 short "The Brave Little Tailor." Here again, Disney pulls his inspiration from the magical world of fairy tales and pits his lovable rodent hero against a monstrous giant. By the time this short was produced, the Disney studios had made great strides in the art of theatrical cartoons, quite evident in this episode's numerous scenes including Mickey's narrow escapes from the giant's deadly footsteps.

This videocassette continues by presenting a hodgepodge of classics. "The Old Mill," a 1937 Oscar winning Silly Symphony, is a visual feast for the eyes, depicting animal life and a gorgeous landscape with a nearly three-dimensional depth. It also displays Disney's talent for conveying *suspense,* as the viewer actually shares the terror felt by the innocent wildlife creatures during a ferocious thunderstorm. Fans of the world's favorite fowl will "quack" up at "Donald's Crime," a 1945 entry where Donald Duck faces an unbeatable menace: his own conscience. That short also features a remarkably creative dance sequence between Daisy and Donald that will have you tapping your feet and snapping your fingers.

Another Silly Symphony, "The Tortoise and the Hare," is based upon the kiddie classic, and also earned a 1934 Academy Award for "Best Cartoon Short Subject." Finally, Mickey Mouse and Pluto tangle with the malicious Chip and Dale in 1946's hilarious "Squatter's Rights."

More of Disney's Best 1932-1946 definitely lives up to its name, and is a marvelous excusion into the realm of fantasy, entertainment, and fun.

A SALUTE TO FRIZ FRELENG (Warner Bros. Cartoon Jubilee, 24 Karat Collection). Warner Home Video, 57 min., $19.98.

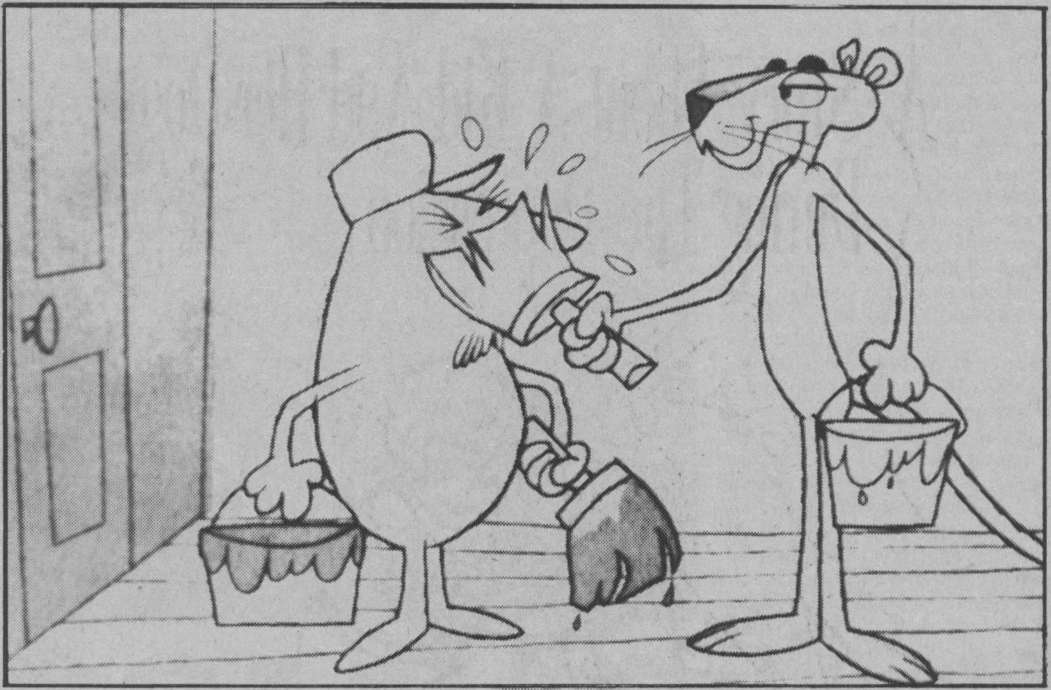
While no one can slight the Walt Disney Studios for their innovations in animation, Warner Bros. was also responsible for molding the careers of some of the most notable names in the field: Chuck Jones, Tex Avery, Bob Clampett, and Isadore "Friz" Freleng. Director Freleng, a four-time Academy Award winner, is honored in this mirthful cartoon collection called *A Salute to Friz Freleng.*

Warner Bros. animated features were distinctly unique due to their recurring formulas. In each cartoon, a formula is introduced, reiterated on several occasions, and just before it runs the risk of overextending itself, resolved.

The formula of 1957's "Birds Anonymous," this videocassette's opening installment, is a familiar one: cat vs. bird. Sylvester, the every-hungry feline, attempts to relinquish his unending quest to eat Tweety Bird by joining Birds Anonymous, an organization composed of cats trying to kick the bird-devouring habit. Not only is this episode highlighted by classic Warner Bros. sight gags, but its parody of an Alcoholic Anonymous meeting makes you laugh out loud (one cat testifies: "Being on a bird kick cost me five homes. B.A. helped me solve my problem.").

In "High Diving Hare," sly Bugs Bunny is pitted against moronic Yosemite Sam. Bugs is a carnival barker that is forced at gunpoint by Sam to replace a star high diver who cancels his performance. Of course, Bugs Bunny outwits Yosemite Sam repeatedly, tricking him into falling off the diving board again and again and again.

Sylvester the Cat returns to tangle with the fastest mouse alive in "Speedy Gonzales," a 1955 Oscar winner. Speedy easily avoids each of the traps laid by Sylvester, causing the cat a great deal of discomfort in the process. "A Mouse Divided" is yet



Do-dum do-dummm. . .do-dum do-dumm: The Pink Panther paints the town pink in his "Festival."

another Sylvester entry, where a stork gets plastered and inadvertently deposits a baby mouse in the home of Warner Bros.' favorite feline and his wife. Here, the standard cat vs. mouse formula is accented with an inventive twist: after Sylvester defeats his own urges to eat his newfound "son," he must thwart the advances of a band of hungry alleycats, all hellbent on dining on baby rodent.

The "Bugs Bunny Outwits Yosemite Sam" formula resurfaces in "Bunker Hill Bunny" and "Knighty Knight Bugs." The former features patriot Bugs defending a fort against the advances of Hessian Sam; the latter casts Sam as the dreaded Black Knight, a villain who tries to retrieve the legendary "singing sword" from the heroic hare. You'll also chuckle at the names of some of the men of the Round Table in "Knighty Knight Bugs," including "Sir Osis of Liver" and "Sir Loin of Beef."

Concluding the package is "Show Biz Bugs," where Daffy Duck struggles with Bugs Bunny for stage exposure in their theatre revue, and "Greedy for Tweety," another Sylvester and Tweety romp, this time set in an animal hospital.

These cartoons exemplify the genius of Friz Freleng, whose ability to merge music with slapstick violence has created some truly unforgettable moments on screen. Most of these episodes were scripted by the prolific Warren Foster, the man behind many of the screenplays for TV's original "Flintstones" series. Also highly recommended: *A Salute to Chuck Jones.*

THE PINK PANTHER CARTOON FESTIVAL, Featuring "Pink-A-Boo," MGM/UA Home Video, 56 min., $24.95.

Friz Freleng returns as co-producer (along with David H. DePatie) of *The Pink Panther Cartoon Festival*, starring the slinky feline character who originated in the title credits of the 1964 spy film farce, *The Pink Panther.* Freleng's influence is obvious in the Pink Panther animated series, as these cartoons rely heavily upon slapstick sight gags, music, and sound effects. Those elements are crucial, since the Pink Panther cartoons are totally devoid of dialogue or narration.

Freleng's tenure at Warner Bros. is also evident in the Pink Panther cartoons from the presence of that good ol', handy-dandy recurring *formula* in each episode. The collection opens with 1968's "Slink Pink," where the Panther sneaks into a hunter's cozy home and unleashes a war against his trusty dog, who is desperately trying to warn his master of the pink intruder. Of course, the Panther inflicts a series of painful misfortunes onto the poor mutt.

The second cartoon, "Come On In! The Water's Pink," is a boisterous battle between the Pink Panther and an egocentric muscle builder at Bicep Beach. The weightlifter's overblown ego—and body—is bruised by the Panther's cunning.

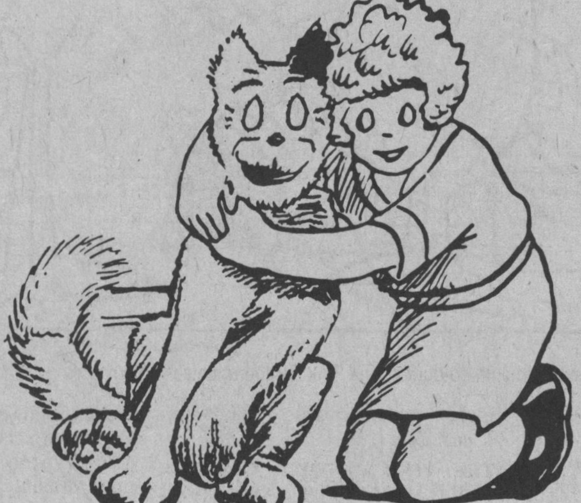
1975's "Bobolink Pink" is uncannily similar to Friz Freleng's Sylvester cartoon "A Mouse Divided," discussed earlier in this column. Here the Pink Panther protects a helpless bird from a hungry stray cat. Who says a winning formula can't be used successfully again?

The Pink Panther Cartoon Festival contains a total of nine episodes, including "Pink Aye," "Pink-A-Boo," "In the Pink of the Night," "Extinct Pink," and "Smile Pretty, Say Pink" (do you detect a pattern in those titles?). The videocassette's best entry is "Bully for Pink," a 1965 classic that revolves around the Panther's antics as a Mexican toreador. This cartoon houses a wealth of unbelievably funny visual sequences, as the magician's cape the Pink Panther uses as a bullfighting tool spits forth every magic gimmick imaginable, from making flowers appear from thin air to sawing the bull in half. Ole!

The only problem with this videocassette is its lack of diversity. Nine Pink Panther cartoons are tedious to watch in one sitting, even for the most diehard of fans. The Disney and Warner Bros. cassettes covered in this column contained a variety of material, while the Panther volume would have definitely benefited from the inclusion of DePatie/Freleng's "Tijuana Toads," "The Inspector," and/or "The Ant and the Aardvark" shorts. Nonetheless, *The Pink Panther Cartoon Festival* is a lot of fun and worth the cost of rental or purchase. ●

MICHAEL EURY is a columnist for Amazing Heroes.

A Story About A Kid And Her Dog During The Depression



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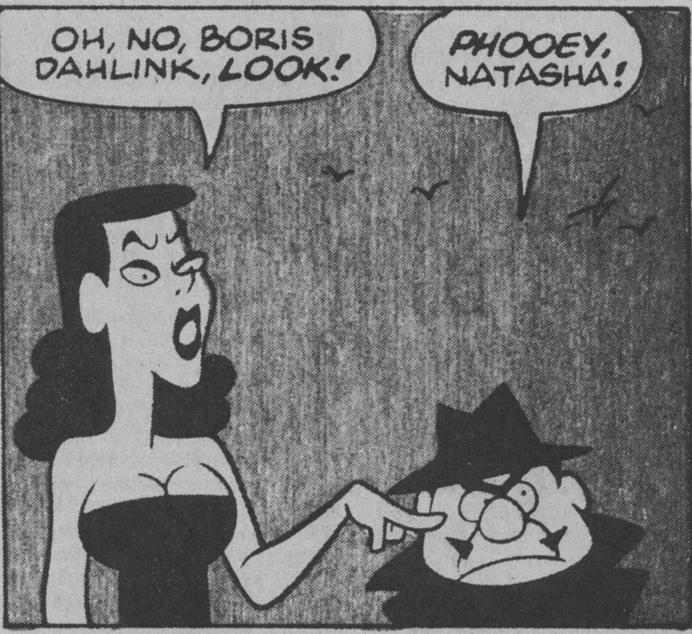

OH, NO, BORIS DAHLINK, LOOK!
PHOOEY, NATASHA!

COMICS in review

by Michael Eury

The comic book market of 30 years ago was vastly different from that of today. While Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, and Superboy were virtually the only costumed heroes headlining their own titles, the industry promoted diversity, as western, horror, teen humor, crime, romance, and science-fiction series populated the stands. During that era, funny animal comic books rose to popularity, with titles like *The Fox and the Crow* and *Peter Porkchops* becoming "fan favorites."

Today's market bears little resemblance to the '50s. For every *Heathcliff* or *Uncle Scrooge* you'll find two dozen or more super-hero titles. Fortunately, more and more publishers are experimenting with a revival of the funny animal genre. Marvel's Star Comics initiated the trend a few years ago, although the bulk of their material is more toy-oriented rather than *true* funny animal humor. Gladstone is now issuing Walt Disney titles, Harvey Comics is back in business, and Spotlight Comics has resurrected *Mighty Mouse* and *Underdog*. Additionally, new characters have debuted, such as Dark Horse Comics' *Boris the Bear.*

How are the comics doing? Let's take a gander at a few of the latest funny animal books. . .

BULLWINKLE AND ROCKY #1. Written by David Manak; pencilled by Ernie Colon; inked by Jacqueline Roettcher; edited by Sid Jacobson. Marvel/Star Comics; $1.00.

Dimwitted Bullwinkle Moose and his pal, Rocky the Flying Squirrel, debuted on ABC-TV in September of 1959, in a series entitled "Rocky and His Friends." That program introduced viewers to a legion of wild and wacky characters, whose innate appeal and bizarre originality made them stars: Boris Badenov and Natasha Fatale, the twisted Soviet spies who constantly bungled their missions; the time-traveling canine Mr. Peabody and his "son" Sherman; and Dudley Do-Right, the dashing but dumb Royal Canadian Mountie. Although only a few seasons of episodes were produced, the series can still be found today in some syndicated television markets. . .*and* in the memories of millions of adults.

There is no denying the comic genius of *Bullwinkle and Rocky* creator Jay Ward. His eccentric brainchildren were very funny to juvenile readers; moreover, their adventures contained enough clever satire to keep adult viewers laughing out loud. It is that unusual appeal to all age groups that made Rocky and Bullwinkle legends of popular culture—why, they're nearly sacred icons to some folks! When dealing with characters so firmly entrenched in the hearts and minds of people, one must remain true to the original. Fans of "moose and squirrel" expect no less.

Those fans will be happy to learn that Marvel/Star's new *Bullwinkle and Rocky* comic maintains the spirit of the classic Jay Ward television series.

Just like so many of the TV episodes, the comic book opens with Rocky and Bullwinkle in dire peril: this time they're trapped in a runaway train. Before this situation can be resolved, Bullwinkle interrupts by exclaiming "Wait just a goldern second! That's the WRONG STORY!" Unexpectedly, the action shifts direction, introducing a totally different scenario.

The issue's main tale, "The Invisible Ray" or "————!" details Bullwinkle's acquisition of a cheap flashlight that, after being exposed to the cosmic rays of a nearby meteorite, can make objects intangible. Boris and Natasha soon catch wind of this gadget, resulting in a series of comic mishaps that take our heroes—and the villains—to faraway Hong Kong. Naturally, Bullwinkle and Rocky prevail over the forces of evil, evoking lots of laughs along the way.

The main story breaks in the middle, as did the TV show, for a pair of vignettes. The first, an installment of "Fractured Fairy Tales" (another carryover from the old series), slows the pace established by the Bullwinkle and Rocky adventure. It's the story of a heartsick witch and her affinity for turning princes who have scorned her into frogs. This interlude is simply *not funny*. . . better luck next time, guys! Following that is a two-page "Bullwinkle's Corner" feature, where the moose's attempts to recite "Twinkle,

Twinkle, Little Star" turn disastrous. Again, the chuckles are few in this mini-tale, and it definitely pales in comparison to the lead story.

Despite these failures, the overlook for the future of Star Comics' *Bullwinkle and Rocky* looks bright. The handling of the principal characters, coupled with the humorous and stylishly simplistic art, provides a welcome homage to the original TV series. The talented creative team of Dave Manak and Ernie Colon appears enthusiastic about this new title. Don't let the Star Comics banner dissuade you from buying *Bullwinkle and Rocky*. If you do, then you're missing out on a lot of fun!

DONALD DUCK ADVENTURES #1. Written by Byron Erickson, Carl Barks, and Bob Foster; drawn by Daan Jippes, Ben Verhagen, Carl Barks, and Frank Smith; edited by Leonard (John) Clark and Geoffrey Blum. Gladstone Publishing, Ltd., 95¢.

This new Walt Disney title begins with an editorial that states: "We'd like this comic book to make you forget the humdrum, work-a-day world and carry you away to exotic locales in search of *adventure*." That is no idle boast, as *Donald Duck Adventures* #1 truly lives up to that claim.

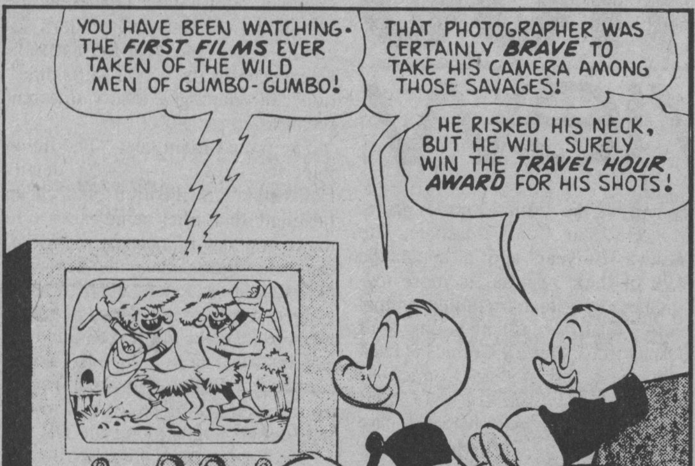
The opening story is "Donald Duck and Isabella," an exciting yarn produced in Haarlem, The Netherlands, by Oberon Publishing. It features Donald as a ferry boat captain that has mastered the sea, with nephews Huey, Dewey, and Louie on board as his first mates (whatever happened to child labor laws?). The four fowls share an unlikely friend: Isabella, a lovable whale who dances to Donald's accordion playing. The adventure begins as the ducks are sucked into the core of the dreaded "Whirling Dervish" whirlpool, and discover an airtight undersea community composed of shipwrecked souls who have found a sub-oceanic Utopia (they don't have taxes, corruption, or smog!). Donald is tempted to stay there, but the boys convince him to return home by manipulating his greed. The story also has a shifty villain named Fleagle and some comedic bits with Donald at his frenetic best. What more could any Disney fan want?

Concluding the issue is a Carl Barks classic, "Jungle Hi-Jinks," where Huey, Dewey, and Louie film a bogus jungle native scenario in order to win a television "Travel Hour" contest. Of course, the impetuous "Unca Donald" plays a frightening trick on the kids by donning a self-made demon mask in an attempt to teach them a lesson.

The action eventually shifts to the wilds of Africa, as Donald, Huey, and Louie are hired by an explorative film crew. Here we witness the magic Carl Barks in an amusing sequence where Donald is chased up a tree by a raging lion, plucked from its branches by a giant bird, tossed into a river onto a vicious crocodile, and finally thrust into the massive arms of an angry gorilla. Whew! And you thought *you* had a bad day!

If the premiere issue is any indication of what is to come, then readers of *Donald Duck Adventures* are in for chills and chuckles!

Donald Duck Adventures wants to make us forget the humdrum, work-a-day world—and succeeds, thanks to stories by people like Carl Barks.


YOU HAVE BEEN WATCHING. THE *FIRST FILMS* EVER TAKEN OF THE WILD MEN OF GUMBO-GUMBO!
THAT PHOTOGRAPHER WAS CERTAINLY *BRAVE* TO TAKE HIS CAMERA AMONG THOSE SAVAGES!
HE RISKED HIS NECK, BUT HE WILL SURELY WIN THE *TRAVEL HOUR AWARD* FOR HIS SHOTS!

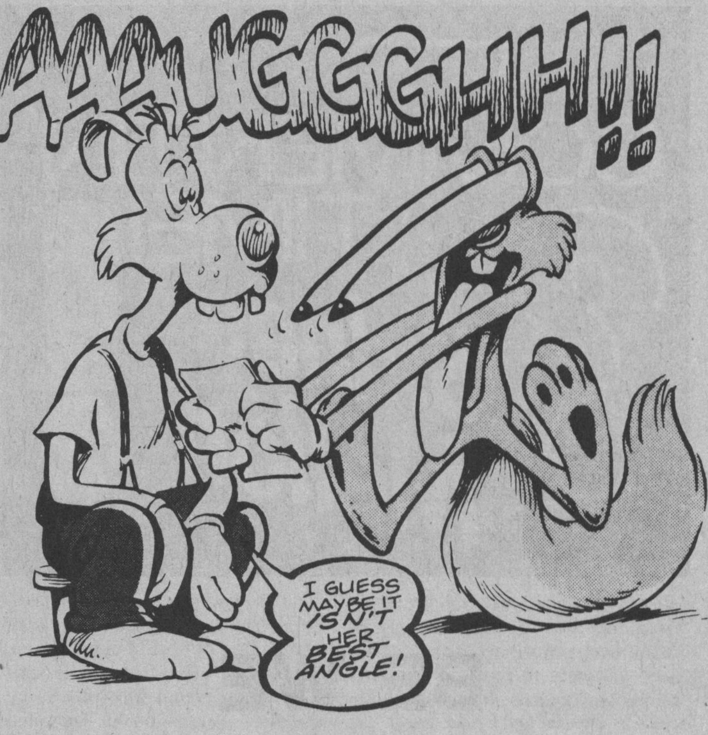
WACKY SQUIRREL SUMMER FUN SPECIAL #1. Written by Mike Richardson and Jim Bradrick; drawn by Jim Bradrick; edited by Randy Stradley. Dark Horse Comics, $2.00.

The cover of this special edition features Wacky Squirrel, in true mischievous form, igniting a stick of dynamite with a magnifying glass. This is the Wacky we've been introduced to in the pages of *Boris the Bear*: a zany, no-holds-barred cartoon creature in the riotous vein of animator Tex Avery. When Wacky's around, one can expect him to pull a sledgehammer out of nowhere and clobber a no-goodnik with it. Unfortunately, the lunacy that once surrounded the character is sorely absent from *Wacky Squirrel Summer Fun Special* #1, a comic book that tries so hard to emulate the adventure stories of Carl Barks that it totally forgets who its star is.

There *are* some funny moments in this story. Take, for example, the eye-popping, mouth-gaping expression Wacky makes when he spies a photo of Harold the Dopey Dog's homely girlfriend, Hermione. . .you'd almost think that Tex Avery himself had drawn that panel! And there are also tons of puns, primarily variations of famous names like "Captain Gooseteau" and "Doctor Isaac Azimuth." Jim Bradick's art is indeed exceptional, balancing standard funny animal simplicity with inventive panel layouts. But these creative zeniths just cannot salvage a story that is nowhere near as funny as it should be.

The *Special*'s tale, "The Lost Gold of Borneo," sends Wacky and company on a quest for treasure, where they constantly overcome menaces and meet new allies. Although the scripting and art are quite competent, the plot and supporting cast so reek of Disney that you could easily substitute Donald Duck and his trio of nephews into the comic without altering much of the script. This is not what we've come to expect from Wacky Squirrel. If we want to read about funny animal jungle expeditions, then we'll pick up an issue of *Donald Duck Adventures.*

Dark Horse Comics is planning more Wacky Squirrel issues in the near future. Here's hoping that they return the character to its madcap roots. Give us exploding cigars and falling anvils, and leave the globe-trotting to Walt Disney and Carl Barks (and maybe Meadowlark Lemon)!


AAAUGGGHH!!
I GUESS MAYBE IT ISN'T HER BEST ANGLE!

Tex Avery-inspired hijinx in *Wacky Squirrel Summer Fun Special* #1.

HARVEY COMICS SPOTLITE #2 (Baby Huey). Contributing talent: Carlos Gomes DeFreitas, Brian Boerner, Mike Curtis, Paul Maringelli, Bill White, John Holiwski, Gary Fields, and Nate Butler; edited by Ken Selig. Harvey Publications, 75¢.

Baby Huey is back . . . and some of you probably didn't even know he was missing!

Huey is incredibly powerful infant duckling whose naivete frequently gets him into trouble. Like Rocky and Bullwinkle, Baby Huey brings with him a long history in animation. Appearing in theatrical cartoon shorts produced by the Famous Studios from 1951-1959, Baby Huey eventually segued into television as part of the "Casper the Friendly Ghost" show, where he still appears today in some syndicated markets.

With Harvey Comics' recent resurgence into the publishing field, it was only a matter of time before Baby Huey rejoined his peers Richie Rich and Hot Stuff. The cover of *Harvey Comics Spotlite* #2 is indicative of the essence of the titanic toddler: thirsty for a drink, Baby Huey effortlessly rips a water fountain from its cement foundations. Such behavior is typical for a character whose tears can cause flooding.

Baby Huey's return is chronicled in a 15-page, three-chapter story where he and his bully friend Quincy Quack run away from home. Actually, Quincy is the runaway—Baby Huey just goes along for the ride. That ride takes the kids on an adventure down the Kwakissippi River, where Huey's strength and playful exuberance assist the police in capturing a band of river pirates.

Interjected between the three parts of the Baby Huey story are a number of short features starring other Harvey Comics luminaries. The first, a "Buzzy the Crow" two-pager, displays an effective use of violent slapstick gags, a staple of funny animal cartoons. While defending himself against a hungry cat, Buzzy leads his feline adversary through a variety of pratfalls, which includes trapping him in an automatic pickling machine and sealing him in a jar.

Also on hand in *Harvey Comics Spotlite* #2 is a second "Buzzy" short, a story starring the mouse and cat "Herman and Katnip," and a centerpiece tiddlywink game hosted by Richie Rich. And, if that's not enough, there's a letters page, a section for Richie Rich fans to contribute ideas to the "Poor Little Rich Boy's" strip and a Public Service Announcement with Casper reminding us all to brush and floss our teeth daily. There hasn't been this much fun between the covers of a 32-page comic book in ages!

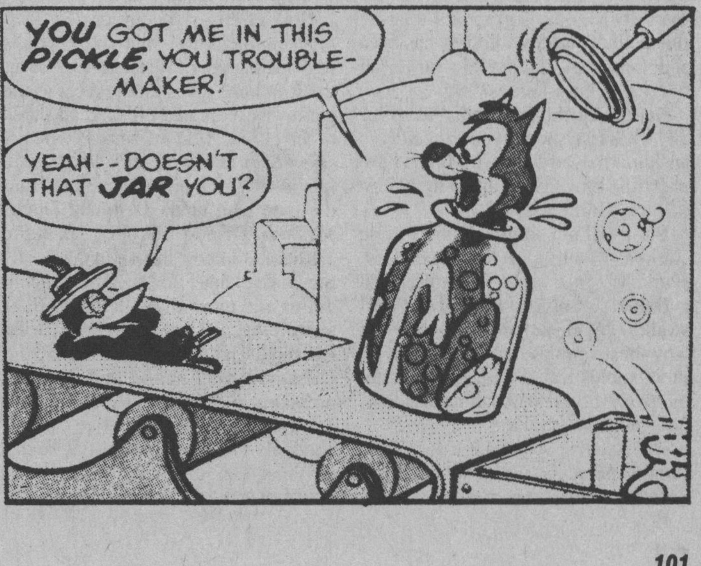
It's great to see Harvey's return to publishing, as "kiddie comics" have not exactly been in vogue in recent years. The stories in *Harvey Comics Spotlite* #2 convey an entertaining and innocent charm long missing from the market. Many adult comics readers were weaned on Baby Huey before they graduated to Spider-Man . . . and then beyond. During the '80s, this industry has taken pride in graphic artistic achievements like *Dark Knight*, *Love & Rockets*, and *Watchmen*, but we simply cannot continue to ignore the children's comic book market. If we do, the comics readership will not replenish itself in the future. Welcome back, Baby Huey!

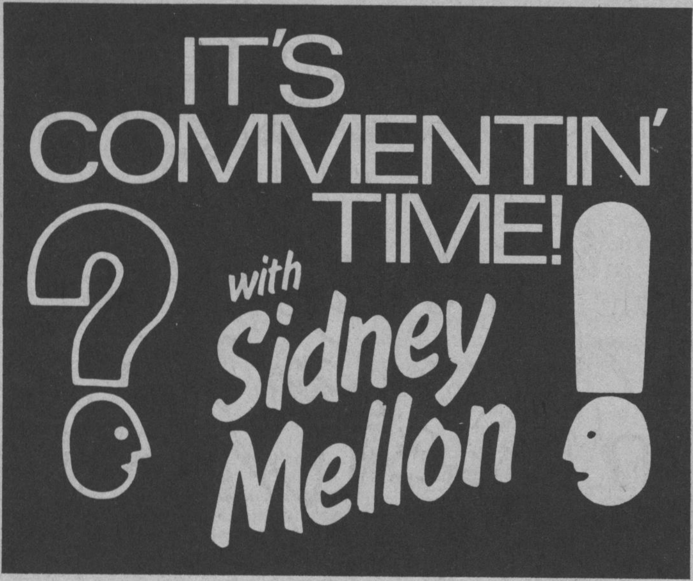
Now, let's take a look at some other funny animal comics, like *Blue Beetle*. Say what? Oh . . . How about *Maus*? Not that, either? Darn. Well, I can always discuss *Wild Dog*. No? You're kidding! How do these publishers get away with these misleading titles? What ever happened to truth in advertising?

Next, we'll examine *The Badger*. Uh, what's that . . . ●

MICHAEL EURY is still a regular columnist for Amazing Heroes.

Buzzy the Crow from *Harvey Comics Spotlite*: great to see them back!


YOU GOT ME IN THIS PICKLE, YOU TROUBLE-MAKER!
YEAH--DOESN'T THAT JAR YOU?



IT'S COMMENTIN' TIME! with Sidney Mellon

BE WE MAN OR BEAST?

"When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: But when I became a man I put away childish things."
—*Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*

When my editor, Mr. Kevin Dooly, told me that Kim Thompson was going to edit an all funny animals issue of *Amazing Heroes,* I almost gagged. "Why would anybody want to do that?" I gasped. "Doesn't Kim realize that in the maturity of today's graphic literature this kind of childish silliness has been supplanted by the mythic power of today's mighty heroes?"

But then I thought about it. After all, what else should you expect from an editor named "Kim"? Women have a terrible time giving up on the things of their childhood.

But I will not simply dismiss these "animal" comics as most connoisseurs of great epic literature and action-art would. Instead I will swallow my pride and show you just why these comics had to give way to more sophisticated fare, just as all of us, from the great Bartlett on down, have become a man.

For starters, let's take a look at a funny animal comic that was published recently that somebody told me was supposed to be "critically acclaimed," which is namely *Donald Duck in Old California.* If you look at this comic, you might think it was written and drawn by Walt Disney, who of course is famous to us all as the great creator of children's entertainment, because that's the only name that appears on the comic. But if you study the fine print on the inside of the cover, what do you discover?

This comic was actually written and drawn by a man named *Carl Barks!* Not by Walt Disney at all!

Now, if I buy a copy of *The Fantastic Four,* I know right away who is responsible for its excellence. Sure, the first page gives due respect to the genius who created this and all those other classic Marvel series, when it says "Stan Lee Presents." That's only fair, just as it's fair to give credit to the man who created Donald Duck, Mr. Walt Disney. But one look at the credits and I know that I can thank Mr. Steve Englehart for all the searing drama and more-than-lifelike characterizations, and I can thank Mr. John Buscema and Joe Sinnott for all the pulse-pounding action and epic expressions. No one tries to fool me into thinking that Mr. Stan Lee singlehandedly created this book, as he did all those classics in the 1960s.

But that is just what is happening with this "Walt Disney's Donald Duck in Old California." Somebody told me that fans of this kind of book actually had to do a lot of research and investigating to find out that they were written and drawn by this Carl Barks so they could put it inside the cover! What kind of quality can you expect from a book where the artist and writer doesn't even have the pride to sign *his own name?*

Well, I guess the answer to that comes as soon as you try to read the comic. It opens with Donald and his nephews stuck in a traffic jam on the freeway. Pretty exciting so far, huh? But you hardly even care about what's happening because of the art.

The first thing you notice is that the cars are totally unrealistic. They are very old-fashioned and exaggerated, almost as if the artist was trying to make them look funny so we would laugh. But if you look at the draings of buildings and trees and things, you will see that Barks *can* draw realistically. It's too bad he missed this golden opportunity to create a believable atmosphere by giving us detailed, respectful renderings of today's awesome vehicles.

And those *faces!* Sure, they're ducks. And *talking* ducks, which you kind of expect in kid's comics. But surely, Mr. Barks, you can draw much more realistic ducks than these! When Marvel made the mistake of trying to cash in on the funny animal market years ago with *Howard the Duck,* at least they were smart enough to put realistic artist like Frank Brunner and Gene Colan on the book. Look at that book and notice the three-dimensional shading, the loving detail, the dramatic action sequences. You might learn some things from these artists, Mr. Barks! Then maybe your book will be turned into a movie by the likes of George Lucas, instead of just a children's entertainer like Walt Disney.

But enough about the art. Maybe that isn't really a fair criticism anyway, since children lack the education to appreciate great artwork anyway. After all, if Carl Barks were a great graphic storyteller, he would probably already be working for Marvel or the New DC. But all children appreciate a good story. And if this story were good, we could forgive all the inconsistencies of the drawing.

So let's look at the story. Donald and his nephews get out of the traffic jam, and they pass a ruined Mexican mission, and they crash into a rock, and Indians give them herbs. So far, so good. I see many story possibilities right here. For example, the herbs might give our heroes amazing abilities, and set them battling each other seemingly to the death. But then they would discover an eldritch evil entity within the ruins, bairn of some ancient

Mexican sorcerer, which they must subdue lest it threaten the Earth itself. And just when they are the very brink of bitter defeat, just when they are nigh destroyed by the very incarnation of eldritch evil, they discover that they can battle not as *individuals*. . . by as a *team!* And then, in a climax of stirring drama, they turn our despair into cries of triumph as they snatch victory from the very jaws of deafeat!

But does any of this happen? No such luck. Just what does happen for the other 25 pages of this "classic"? *Nothing!*

Yes, you heard right. N-O-T-H-I-N-G.

Because you know what? This whole story is a dream!

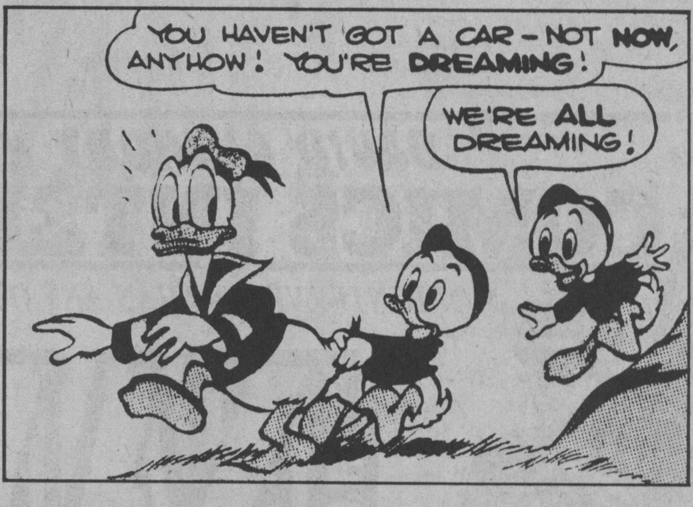
That's right. The herbs the Indians give Donald and his nephews are some kind of drug that makes them think they are going back in time to when California was full of Mexicans. They get involved in some relationships and meet a lot of personages from past history, and then the wake up in a hospital where a doctor tells them what happened. And that's what you get for your 95 cents!

Now, I don't want to get involved in the debate on ratings and censorship, although I can promise you that I, Sidney Mellon, would not have approved a story for children showing drug abuse if *I* were an editor.

But I will say this: I cannot imagine how any graphic publisher can hope to stay in business if he lets his writers get away with easy shortcuts like making a whole issue be a *dream!* Especially when time-travel is so easy to achieve, as proven by the West Coast Avengers, Kang the Conqueror, and other established giants of modern graphic literature! Personally I think time-travel sagas are an important part of literature, because they can educate us about history and about the awesome implications of time-paradoxes while they serve up stirring adventure yarns. But if the saga is a dream, it defeats its own purpose. If I'm going to read a time-travel story, I want to know that it's *real!*

With Marvel and the New DC, I know that every story I read is real. For example, take one of the masterpieces of modern literature, the "mutant holocaust" epic of *X-Men* numbers 141 and 142. Now, Chris Claremont and John Byrne could have made this soul-chilling tale of terror and intolerance "just a dream" if they'd wanted. Sure. That would have been the easy way out. But they didn't. Instead, they made it an alternate future. An alternate future just as real as your *own* alternate futures. And what could be more horrifying?

Pity indeed that Mr. Barks did not harken to the example of Mr. Claremont and Mr. Byrne. For in this tale of "Old California" lie seeds of what might have been an excellent multi-issue storyline.


YOU HAVEN'T GOT A CAR – NOT NOW, ANYHOW! YOU'RE DREAMING!
WE'RE ALL DREAMING!

Easy shortcuts like this one make Mr. Barks's story unappealing to the mature connoisseur of the graphic art medium.

For example, we have the relationship of Panchita and Rolando. This might have been a moving romantic sub-plot, just as gripping as the drama of Terry Long and Donna Troy in *New Teen Titans.* They might have had years of misunderstandings and confessions and growing together that would have kept all fans in suspense until the big wedding issue. And since they are in the past, it could turn out that one of their descendants is an important part of Donald Duck's present-day continuity, perhaps in some ironic suprise someone he least suspects. And a future descendent could even be a scientist who has mastered time-travel himself and goes back in time to become a Babylonian Pharaoh or other historical mystery.

But can any of this happen? No. Because it was all a dream.

Now, I know that not every great graphic story has to be real. Right now all of you are shouting, "But Sidney! What about 'Kitty's Fairy Tale' and other fictional X-Men stories?" Ah yes, but you neglect one important difference! Because the tales woven by Kitty Pryde and such other innovative works of fiction by Chris Claremont serve one all-important purpose: They develop *characterization.*

But what kind of characterization is there in Carl Barks' work? Well, I can give you a one-word answer. As the French say. . .*nada.*

Here is a team of four heroic adventurers. But do they display the colorful interaction of a Fantastic Four? The moving relationship of a New Mutants? Even the realistic hostility of a Suicide Squad? Nothing like it. In fact, three of the characters, Donald's nephews, are so alike they may as well be one character!

The tragedy is, this would have been so easy to correct. For example, Barks could make Huey the seemingly happy-go-lucky comedian of the group, but his thoughts could reveal the deep personal tragedy which forces him to make jokes lest depression overwhelm him. Then he could make Dewey an angry hothead whose fiery temper hides the fact that he is really insecure. And Louie could be a mutant who was raised in a demonic nether-dimension.

How much more *drama,* how much more *realism* this story might have had then!

But instead, what do we get? Just four talking ducks dreaming about silly adventures in Old California. In short, we get not graphic literature. . . but just a comic book.

And you know what's most pathetic of all? The publishers of this comic book, Gladstone, try to make up for the lack of characterization and realism and epic conflict and blistering action by cramming in a lot of extra story. The story is 28 pages long, instead of the customary 19 or 20, and every page has eight tiny panels instead of the bold five or six that we've come to expect from the major publishers. Even the first page, instead of offering the readers an exciting full-page splash panel, gives us only a half-page drawing and then four more little panels of story.

Does Gladstone thnk they are showing Marvel and the New DC up? Do they think they can actually make up for a lack of true modern drama with a lot of extra historical background, slapstick humor, scenes about characters we'll never see again, and development of a plot that isn't even *real?*

Sorry, Gladstone. But Sidney Mellon is one reader you just can't fool. ●

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S

COMICS INTERVIEW

MORE INTERVIEWS THAN ANY OTHER MAGAZINE!

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THE WAY IT WAS.

#53:

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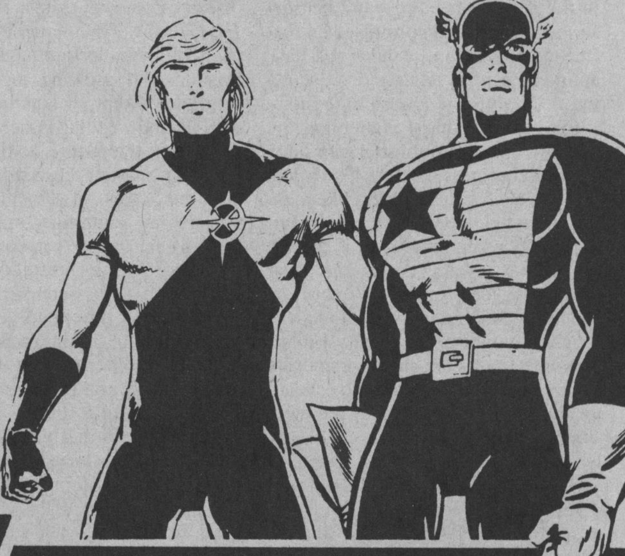

#54:

Byrne is back and the New Universe will never be the same! Marvel's Executive Editor/Writer, Mark Gruenwald, spills secrets on the shake-ups in store for the *new* New Universe, D.P. 7, and *The Captain* in the post-Shooter Marvel Universe!

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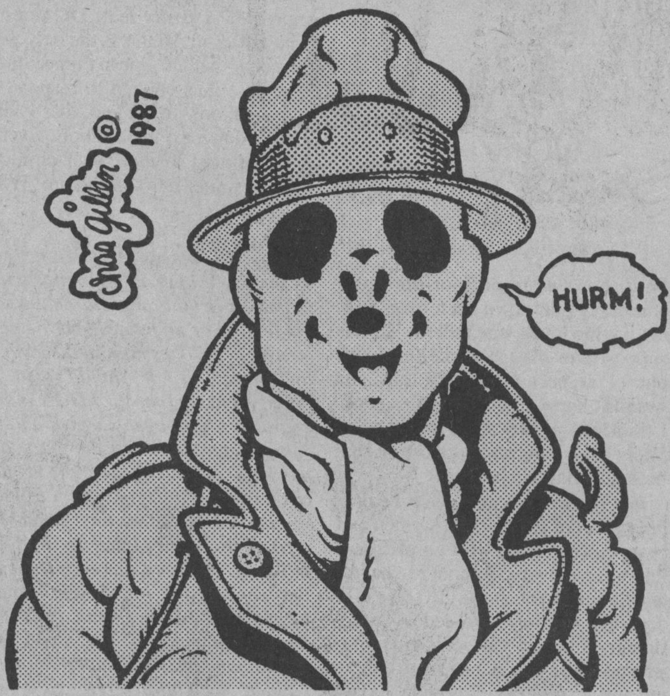


CHAS. GILLEN

The Romans used to throw the Christians to the lions. People in the Middle ages used to torment bears with pointy sticks. I used to write the answers to the letters in the Amazing Heroes *letters column.*

Those dim dear days have long since passed, but since I befouled the rest of the issue with my presence, it seemed only fitting to do so here. Or that's what the silver-tongued Mr. Dooley told me. He just wants me to get into trouble. Oh well, here we go. . .

—KT

DANNY DeANGELO
So. Boston, MA

Not All For DC

You've been seeing my letters all over the place lately in DC comics, as well as here in *Amazing Heroes*, and it's high time I set everyone straight on where I stand in my opinions towards DC's new comics. Everyone sees my letters in the comics and thinks I'm all for DC, but that just ain't so! Take a good look at DC's letter columns—they're filled with praise. My comments about disliking the Byrne version of Clark Kent in *Superman* are the closest things to criticism you see. DC never prints my *really* critical letters. And they've often cut criticisms out of the letters you *do* see printed. That's why I'm taking the time to write to AH, because I know you guys will put my opinions out there for everyone to see.

Now, I'm not saying I'm anti-DC. Far from it. But I disagree with a lot of stuff the so-called "new" DC is giving us. Basically, I'm middle of the road, but DC has been offending one more and more with their needless butchering of longtime characters. Now, I've defended *Crisis* and *Man of Steel* in these pages, and I meant every word of it. But since then, things have gotten worse and my feelings towards DC have been changed somewhat.

I originally thought *Crisis* was a good idea. I still do in some ways. I mean, DC *had* to make some changes, I should say improvements, to shake things up a little. Unfortunately, they screwed up! R.A. Jones pointed out some major flaws in the scenes, which I did my best to explain, but *Crisis* still make little sense in the long run.

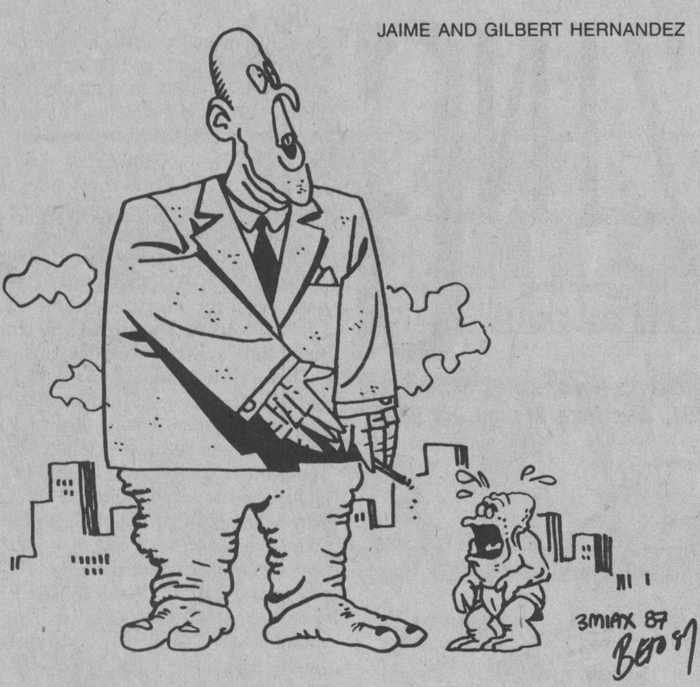
This was most apparent in *History of the DC Universe*. Instead of explaining DC's new history, this barely scratched the surface, leaving one more confused than ever. The old DC multiverse had its problems, but I had no trouble figuring it out, though I can understand how new readers would. Now, however, it's the old readers who are lost, because *Crisis* erased 50 years worth of stories, so nobody knows what happened and what didn't. It'd be different if they just erased stupid stuff. I have no problems with Bat-Mite never existing, but they wiped out good stories too. Superman may have needed revamping, but why Batman? Dr. Fate? Capt. Marvel? What was wrong with them? It's all so frustrating, and *Who's Who* does nothing to help. They give hardly any facts about the characters, unlike the detailed *Marvel Universe*.

And what did *Crisis* do? Well, it changed everyone's history and killed off a few people. I'm not upset about Supergirl, because I don't like female spin-off characters to begin with, but I'll admit she had potential. DC could've tried to improve her instead of killing her. She had *some* fans and they deserved better. So did the Flash, Barry Allen, that is. Why didn't they just leave him in the future to live happily ever after? Why kill him?

As for the history changing, Wonder Woman's the only one that came out okay, though I have some problems with it. I see no reason for having WW's origin take place now instead of years ago when Superman and Batman first appeared. I liked the idea of them as DC's "big three." Now, WW's become the new kid on the block. Other than that, WW is excellent and I have no other gripes.

Superman is another matter. Everyone knows how I feel about Clark Kent. Clark is strong, handsome, successful, and has women falling all over him. In other words, he's a bore. Who needs to be Superman when you've got all that going for you? Clark used to represent the little man. By becoming Superman, he was fulfilling our fantasies. I'm mild-mannered like Clark was. I'd love to strip off my shirt and bend steel in my

JAIME AND GILBERT HERNANDEZ



bare hands. Without Clark, Superman loses a special part of the legend. other than that, the Byrne Superman is okay. But I wish Byrne would actually *write* some stories instead of giving out all these senseless fight scenes. *Man of Steel* was wonderful, but after the first few issues of the regular books, it nosedived. I know Byrne can do better.

The Batman has been totally ruined for me! The Batman is my all-time favorite character in comics whom I used to admire and respect. Now, he has become a psychotic bastard who treats everyone around him like dirt! He callously takes the Robin identity away from Dick Grayson, who is like his own son, because it's too "dangerous." Then, he gives it to some punk off the streets with even less experienced than Dick. Where's the sense in this crap?! I totally despise Max Allan Collins! Not only is he *the* most boring writer of all (and his creation, *Wild Dog*, is *the* stupidest book I've ever seen!), but he has *no* respect for comics! In a CBG editorial, he asked why everyone was so upset at Dick Grayson being screwed up, because Dick wasn't a major literary figure like Captain Ahab or Hamlet. Collins should get the hell out of comics, go write "important" characters like Ahab and Hamlet, and leave the Batman alone! Batman's not important? He's more important than that two-bit hack will ever be! Mike Barr, on the other hand, is doing wonderful stuff in *Detective*, and I thoroughly love his work. Collins can go to blazes for all I care.

Flash isn't a bad book, but Wally West shows *no* respect for Barry. He constantly puts down his former mentor, saying he was penniless. He was supposed to have become the Flash out of respect for Barry, but you wouldn't know it by reading this book. I think his money went to his head! Wally has a *long* way to go before he'll be equal Barry's heroics!

Justice League, or *Justice League International* now, is well-written and beautifully drawn, with an excellent line-up, but everyone's out of character! Batman treats these guys like kindergarten kids instead of fellow crimefighters. Captain Marvel is too childish and doesn't show any signs of having the wisdom of Solomon. Also, without Superman, WW, and Flash, this isn't *really* the Justice League. How dare DC say Superman and WW were never in the JLA?! What's the point in that?!

Finally, the *Dr. Fate* mini-series was total garbage! Instead of giving Dr. Fate a shot at his own back, which he definitely deserved, he was needlessly killed off and replaced with a "new" Dr. Fate! Why?! What was wrong with the old Dr. Fate?! It's one thing to replace Flash, who wasn't selling well, but they never even gave Dr. Fate a chance! The whole JSA was written off, though at least they fared better than Dr. Fate, and are now essentially immortal. What a way to celebrate DC's 50th Anniversary—wipe out all their oldest characters! I like realism in comics, but death is overdone. I don't mind a death that has purpose and doesn't insult the character, like Kraven's in *Spider-Man*. But some deaths are just damn needless and offensive, like those of Dr. Fate, Iron Fist, and Hobgoblin.

Now, I'm not saying I'm against DC, though it sounds that way. I have good reason to be, for sure. But they do some good stuff, too. *Green Lantern Corps*, *Swamp Thing*, *Captain Atom*, and, of course, *Watchmen*. But I'm sick and tired of seeing DC destroy my favorite characters. Now, I hear Martian Manhunter's being revamped. I love J'onn J'onzz and have been dying for a series for years. If DC screws him up, I'll never forgive them!

Anyway, I got that off my chest. I just wanted everyone that thinks I'm totally for new DC from my letters to know how I *really* feel. DC doesn't print criticism, so this is the only way. I'm sorry that DC doesn't repect their long time fans enough to respond to their opinions. In the end, that's what it boils down to: my opinion. Everyone's entitled to their own opinion. I've got mine. DC's got theirs. What about you?

● *Sure. The reason DC feels they can or should revamp all their characters is that invariably the old characters made little or no money and the new, "revamped" ones haul in the cash by the bucketfuls. It should also be pointed out that most of DC's oldest characters have been vamped and revamped constantly over the years, and this latest revamping is simply the first case where it's being left up to individual creators rather than something created by editorial fiat. In the '70s, DC gave you both the excellent new Batman and the rotten new Wonder Woman, for instance. And don't let's forget that many of the Silver Age characters were fixed-up versions of Golden Age characters.*

From my cynical perspective, it's pretty hard to get upset over the altering or killing of characters who've spent up to a decade and a half as outdated bores. I happen not to like the new Superman, although I think the new Batman is sort of cool (not to be taken as an endorsement of Dark Knight *in toto, I hastily point out)—but it was the much-reviled Max Allan Collins who pointed out that these legends are open to any number of interpretations, and there's no reason you can't consider Frank Miller's Batman, Adam West's Batman, and Dick Sprang's Batman—and, for that matter, Max Allan Collins's Batman—as just facets of the same being. Take the long view and it seems a little silly to get this mad about it—especially when it's over things like Robin the Boy Wonder. (Although I must admit I'm pretty teed off over Roy Thomas's new interpretation at Captain Marvel, so who am I to say?)*

What? DC doesn't print critical letters? Hold the presses, Kevin, we've got a scoop here!... —KT

JOHN C. PIRTEL IV
Branford, CT

Defending Byrne and DC

In response to W. Rudd's letter of the August 15th issue...

Well...Well...Mr. Rudd claims that he's been reading comic books for some 20 years...if so, he should know the history of the titles he reads...

First off, in the defense of Mr. Byrne and company...I thought that the Superman Vs. Superboy saga was a good (not excellent...but *good*) way of explaining the existence of The Legion of Super-Heroes...If you remember, the whole idea of the Legion was based on the legend of Superboy...and his existence on Earth...

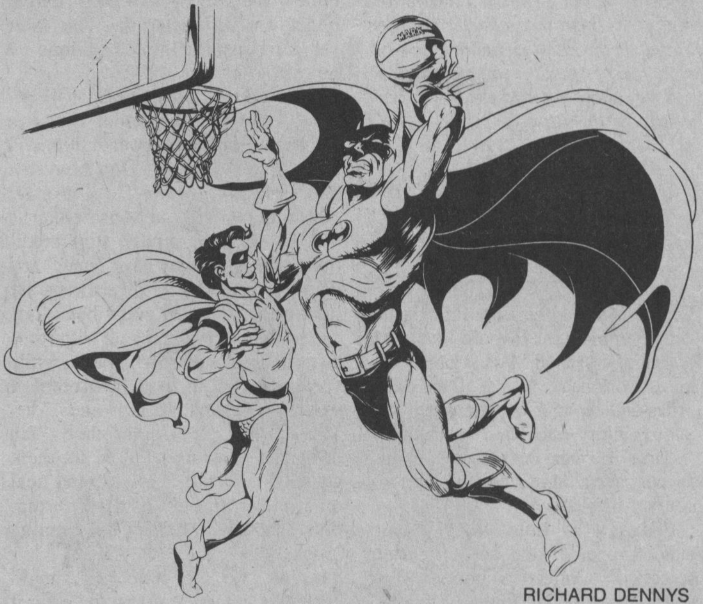
Mr. Rudd...You must realize this and also accept the fact that the changes are still going to come...DC is trying very hard to correct the mistakes and constant change that have occurred in the past 50 years... It's going to take *time*...Let's give it a chance, eh? There's going to be stuff that is going to disgust you...but there will also be lots of stuff that is going to please your eyes...mind... and heart...It's going to take *time*!!

Think about it...Was Superboy really needed??? He did exist...in another time and place...*but* that was long ago...He is remembered by the Legion and by the "new" Superman ...The legend will survive...Krypto on the other hand is a *dog* and he really didn't have the brain of a human no matter how Super he may have been...He wouldn't, in most honesty, know the effects of G-K...I was skeptical about DC handing over the *Superman* titles to John Byrne, but hey, I gave him a chance and I *love* what he has done to Supes!

Mr. Rudd, may I suggest that you go back and read 20 years of comics and tell me how many times Supes, Batman, Green Lantern and company have changed over the past 50 years...sometimes issue to issue...I think it's about time you got off your high horse and give DC credit for trying to climb out of the hole that they spent 50 years digging...

All the best....

- *I say, son, the dot-dot-dot key on your typewriter is sticking a tad. Break 'em up and use 'em one at a time and they'll last longer. By the way, I think Superboy was axed because in the '80s, the idea of a courteous, selfless, and generous teenager is science fiction on the level of flying dogs and people who turn into superhorses. —KT*


RICHARD DENNYS

ARTHUR CROSBY
Louisville, KY

Kim? Oh, No! My House!

Dear Kim,

Finally, after months of pondering and questioning I have uncovered the secret. Yes, the great detective I am, it was easy to deduce. A quick look at *Amazing Heroes* #119 page 81, revealed it all. Kim Thompson is a boy. Hey, wait a minute; you're not Kim. All right, what did you do with Kim!?! That does it, I'm calling the cops. You're in trouble now!

- *Huh! Is there a problem here? Just when I was doing my nails, too. Maybe you're thinking of that other Kim. —KT*

PETER STRINGER
Hamilton, New Zealand

Speaking With a Lengthened Fuse

Glad to see your attack upon opinion abuse. It's something that I certainly agree with. A person should be able to state his thoughts on a certain subject without being a target for personal abuse.

Of course I have a lot of room to talk after calling a reader a moron and writing a nasty letter about Heidi MacDonald; sorry about that, folks, but I was on a short fuse at the time.

Nice to see the Kirby thing over as well (well, sort of, anyway). By the way, a hearty thanks to Kevin Lawles for his letter. It states my own thoughts on the Kirby-Lee thing much better, it seems, than I ever could.

On commenting more about *Amazing Heroes:* Well, I really enjoyed the 4Winds article and "The French Collection." I do think, however, you do have a problem with your reviewer, you just don't have enough of them. The idea that one person can decide how could a comic is by reading just one issue every now and then is a little silly, y'know. How about having three or four, say, one to concentrate on Marvel, one on DC, and, say, one or two on the independents. It's no good getting people with no real interest in Marvel comics to review them. It just leaves you with an unbalanced review.

- *So maybe it's an unbalanced magazine. But seriously, you have a point, and Kevin has been recruiting a wider range of reviewers for just the reasons you cite (although I thought Gerry Jones was pretty darn fair to Marvel and DC myself).*

I feel about abusive letter-columns pretty much the way I do about slam-dancing: If you're gonna wail and moan about it, why'd you get into the pit in the first place? You can stand over here by the bar and not muss a hair.

"Opinion abuse"? It sounds like some new scourge sweeping the nation: "Mandy used to be a happy little girl. But now her dad has lost his job and spends all day locked in the bedroom pounding away at a typewriter. And her mom helps him by looking up synonyms for 'idiot' in the Thesaurus, and calming him down

when an editor prints his letters and replies to them in a caustic manner. Mandy is the latest victim of a new addiction experts call. . .opinion abuse.''

Sorry about the kiwi crack way back when, by the way. —KT

MATTHEW LEWIS
Brooklyn, New York

We The Collector. . .

Before I get to the important issues facing comicdom, I would like to say that boy, am I glad Marvel gave Kirby his artwork back, so that all the hypocrites and phonies out there can stop complaining and find some new "course" to make themselves look like decent caring human beings, which of course, they are *not*!

Folks, it is time we collectors banded together and boycott certain so-called "Collectors Items." Have you noticed these "limited editions" coming out lately, which are supposed to be collectibles?

I say, we stop purchasing *all* limited editions, and I mean *all*. We, the collector, should decide what is a special edition, and not the comics companies, or the artistic talent for that matter.

For example, do we really need a signed, numbered hardcover limited edition of *Dark Knight*? I say no. I believe the four orginal *Dark Knight* books are sufficient, and lose their value, when these limited editions are put out.

Do we need three editions of *Watchmen*, which will be coming out soon in graphic and hardcover editions? I say, don't buy them. Don't buy the $29.95 *History of the DC Universe*, which is coming out soon, either!

Also, we have to put a stop to editions which say they have "new" artwork in them. I say, these artists are just trying to chisel every buck they can out of us, by coming up with some last minute doodles they made, while spending time in their bathrooms. I mean, if Frank Miller and Alan Moore and all these other "fan favorites" want to get rich, let them get their MBA at Harvard, and deal on Wall Street with insider information like all other self-respecting crooks.

Again, we the collectors should create collectors items, by the natural way of supply and demand. We the collector should cause an issue to be in "limited supply" by the process of "hoarding," *not* by a phoney process of signing and numbering a specific amount of issues.

Here's another situation for us collectors as well as those who read comics just for pleasure: let's create rules for black-and-white comics. My rule is this: once a black-and-white comic has a sufficient following, such as the following of *Teen. Mut. N. Turtles*, or *Cerebus*'s readership, I say, the book should go color, or all of us should stop buying the book.

For example, Eastman and Laird have an enormous readership, and yet, they refuse to upgrade their T.M.N.T. to color. They continue to put it out in dull black and white, on a paperstock, which has the quality of toilet paper.

Eastman and Laird only deal with color when they put out their color versions of reprints of T.M.N.T., in graphic novel form. I say, do not buy anything these two slime put out, *until* they upgrade to color.

With great sadness, because it is an excellent book, I say we should also stop purchasing *Cerebus*, until it too, is upgraded to color. (Can you imagine *Dark Knight* in black-and-white. We would have missed a lot).

Also, I have been accused of "sucking up to Marvel" by that lowlife Kevin Hall in issue #122. Well, just to show that I play no favorites, I think everyone should stop buying *Savage Sword of Conan* until it, too, goes to color. Marvel had the never to rip-off loyal *S.S.O.C.* readers by quietly raising it to two bucks, without giving us anything extra for our money. I put it to Tom DeFalco, the new head honcho, make *Savage Sword* a color book and stop ripping off barbarian lovers.

JEFF GAITHER 85

JEFF GAITHER

I DID TAW A PUDDYTAT !!!
Chas Gillen © 1987

CHAS. GILLEN

As for Kevin Hall, I actually pity poor devil, because he is living proof that one's mother should not marry her own brother. So, Kevin, you pathetic worm, I will not attack you.

Finally, why is it that everytime that half-pint Harlan Ellison so much as sneezes, Fantagraphics publications get on their hands and knees to report on what this old wind bag has to say.

I mean, the guy's a fine writer, but he is the oldest "angry young man" on Earth, and his routine is predictable and boring. give him his rattle and bottle, and put him in his playpen.

Let's face it, how smart can Ellison be, when he tried to create a new *Twilight Zone* TV show? That's like some musician trying to create a new "Sargeant Pepper." It just can't be done.

And by the way, I saw Ellison at a convention a few years ago, and he was very entertaining, but he was only around a short time, and then the convention people told him to stop. He himself said it was a rip-off. So Harlan, if you are reading this, you ripped me off, you little weasel.

Also, Ellison has a reputation for [*personal vilification deleted*].

Finally, I am sick of Frank Miller doing work every few years. Hey, Frank, get up off your behind and give us more artwork. How about drawing a *Dennis the Menace* comic book? Issue #1 can have Dennis murdering Mr. Wilson with a machete. Think about it, will you, Frank? Thanks.

● *Actually, neither Frank Miller nor Alan Moore has, to my knowledge, stuck any new material in their reprints. Whoops! I almost forgot myself and answered one of your letters civilly, reasonably, and intelligently. I deleted your personal attacks on Harlan Ellison not because he's a particular personal favorite, God knows, but because if he ties up women and beats them with garden rakes it's no business of yours or mine, and no reflection on his talents as a writer. (I hasten to add that I do not know whether Harlan beats women with garden rakes—I suspect not—and choose this only as an amusingly extreme image.) Your views on color are entertaining. I'd argue the point, but arguing esthetics with you would be like arguing ethics with Yosemite Sam.* —*KT*

MIKE CONDEN
Cheshire, England

Wimpy Superman Revealed in U.K.

I thought you might be interested in this clipping, "Superman the Wimp in Krypton Cover-Up," from the front page of one of our leading newspapers, *The Guardian.* Newspapers in Britain fall into three fairly distinct categories; highbrow (e.g.*The Times, The Guardian*), Middle of the Road, and the Gulter Press (complete with page 3 topless pinups, yes, in a family newspaper!). This is the second time Superman has made the front page of *The Guardian* (but not headlines, yet). The previous occasion being when John Byrne revamped the Man of Steel, complete with a picture of a very hillbilly-looking Mr. Byrne. It almost makes one think that someone at *The Guardian* takes comics semi-seriously.

While I'm writing, I'd like to pass on my thanks for a job well done. *AH* continues to inform and entertain in its usual professional manners. It's essential reding in these "best-of-comics/worst-of-comics' times. My budget is limited, (perhaps the one thing I've got in common with every other *AH* reader!) so I don't want to waste my money on rubbish, preferably. Most of the Marvel/DC output you read and discard, or file into the collection. I wonder how many people re-read their comics, and if so, which ones. I bet most people re-read *Ronin* because you had to and because it was worth it, and I bet most people will re-read *Watchmen* (is -12 out yet?), even if only to enjoy it a second time. How many others, I wonder?

And with that ponderous question hanging in the air, I bid you farewell.

● *The clipping in question reveals that Kryptonite was invented so that a Superman actor could get a few days off his schedule by pretending to be dying in a vault somewhere. I'd be awful curious to see some of the lowbrow British newspapers.* —*KT*

TODD ONKALO
(no address given)

Self-Defense

Once again I put fingers to the typewriter, this time to defend myself. To Pierre Comtois, all I have to say is that I did not accuse Nick Fitt of living in a candy-coated world, but it was actually Paul R. Wilson who was accused of living in Candyland by me. If I must serve as a bad example, please at least allow me the common courtesy of getting right what you think I did wrong.

Secondly, when I first started reading comics, I hated reading words and phrases like "cretin," "dolt," "nebulae unfolding," "suffering Sappho," etc, ad nauseum instead of "damn" or "hell," and especially hated Luke Cage constantly shouting "sweet Christmas" instead of talking "jive" and saying that term that rhymes with brother trucker (of course, the writers probably assumed he talked that way because he was black, a situation that was too silly and really sucked). I found all this substitution really irritating, but I also understood the need for it. Of course, I also swore in my last letter (*AH* #119, the great issue with the Max Allan Collins interview

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Wildly strange and inventive.
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Should take the cake in the post-**Watchmen** derby. Go, Eddy, go!
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Swamp Thing

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—Cefn Ridout
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A neuron-frying excursion into a world of spontaneous insanity.
— Heidi MacDonald
Critic at Large

Grade A-plus.
—Don Thompson
Comics Buyer's Guide

Spiky, twitchy pictures. Buzzy, crackly words. Must still be plugged in, can't put it down. Tzzzzzt.
—Dave Gibbons
Watchmen

!!! (Almost heaven)
—Jeff Kapalka
Comics Week

Well, I'm hooked. Who is this smartass Ted McKeever and where does he get off writing better comics than I do?
—Bruce Jones
Twisted Tales

The comic the black-and-white format was meant for.
—Paul Chadwick
Concrete

MAD DOG graphics

©TED McKEEVER

MARVIN PERRY MANN

and Gumby preview) just to offend anyone who may share Paul R. Wilson and Pierre Comtois' opinion. And, *yes,* it was a stupid and immature thing to do. What is this world coming to!

Kevin Dooley, you are doing a splendid job, and your answer back to Kevin Hall was great. Dare I hope my letter receives the same hilarious responses? This is, after all, in the spirit of fun that I even began writing to you all.

The artwork that graced the lettercol for #122 was fantastic. Overall, the quality of the last year or so of *AH* has remained not only high but consistent, which all the staff and contributors should all take a bow for.

● *Yeah, that's right, give me stage fright. "Make me laugh," huh? Okay, these two nuns and an armadillo go into a bar, see, and....*

No, come to think of it, this is a family publication. Maybe later.—KT

STEVEN HAAG
Plymouth, IN

Plus Ca Change...

I just read the final issue of *Watchmen.* It left me with a nagging feeling of disappointment. Why?

I think part of the answer lies in the way Moore (in my opinion) kept the story going with a great plot for 11 issues and then copped out by borrowing the same theme from the *Outer Limits* episode of "The Architects of Fear." (And then acknowledging his use of said plot device in the story itself).

But a major portion of my discontent stems from what appears to be Moore's "The more (no pun intended) things change" mentality while writing the resolution of the story, i.e., no matter what we do, no matter how hard we try to make it different, history always repeats itself.

Hell, I could have told him that. Look at World War II. Did we really change that much in Europe? We saved England and France. Fine. We saved God knows how many more Jews from the Nazi butchers. But tell me, what about Poland? We kept Germany from taking it over. Great. But who goes in and takes it over after the war is over? That's right, Joe Stalin and friends. Either way, Poland (and many of the other countries Hitler coveted) has lost a very basic freedom: the freedom of choice; to chart its own future without the influence of a totalitarian government.

Oh, well. I could discuss such things as long as I wanted and it would not change anything, would it? Besides, I would probably begin to bore people. (If I haven't already.)

Enough about politics. Back to the issue (again, no pun intended) at hand: the *Watchmen.* Another thing that bothered me was the almost "upbeat" ending; a device currently overused in movies and now by the limited series published by DC. (For another example of this unfortunate trend, look at the ending of *Dark Knight*). What's wrong with the ending? For starters, Adrian Veidt murdered three million people, and all the surviving heroes can say is, "Gee, if we tell the truth, the world is damned." Let me get this straight: a man kills half the population of New York, and nothing happens to him? Of course, we are left to assume by the events on the last page that the truth will be known when Rorschach's journal is published, but who knows?

I can hear the people reading this now, "Hey, man, take it easy. It's only a story." I know it's only a story. A work of fiction. I know that. It's just that I find the whole resolution a bit strange. There's a thing called suspension of belief, which is employed to a great extend by people who read comics, but towards the end I was asked to suspend my belief a little too far.

Lest this next statement sound like a cop-out, I have to admit that I enjoyed the rest of the series. In an age when so many mainstream comics contain nothing but (to borrow a description from Harlan Ellison's essay on television, *The Glass Teat*) pap, it was nice to see a series take a (dare I say it?) realistic view of the "masked man" genre. I mean that. *Watchmen* (and Moore and company) did one basic thing to its characters. It made them human. They kill. They die. By God, they even have sexual hang-ups. You will hardly see things like that coming from "regular" comics.

Who knows? Maybe if I read the

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CHAS. GILLEN

last issue again my opinion of it will change.

But I doubt it.

- Dark Knight *and* Watchmen *too optimistic? That's a new one on me. I think that's supposed to be suspension of disbelief, by the way. —KT*

DONNY ALAN WEBSTER
Hapeville, GA

Another Goddamn Crisis Letter

Concerning the whole point of disagreement between Robert Greenberger and Brian Busch Hughes (whatever his name is) concerning whether the pre-*Crisis on Infinite Earths* DC multiverse is now remembered by those who participated or not. My understanding of how memory works is slightly different from the way in which Hughes apparently understands it. He asks "Can a character really be said to remember something if he is not allowed to refer to it, think about it, or react it it?" Yes, if it is a subconscious or repressed memory. Remember, these characters have been through what could be considered a decidely traumatic experience. So his claim that "Earth 1 characters don't remember Earth 1" and "Earth 2 characters don't remember Earth 2" should be modified by the addition of the word "consciously" before the word "remember." Perhaps under deep hypnosis Superman will remember having been Superboy. Perhaps under deep hypnosis the Earth 1 and 2 characters will indeed recall the multiverse, not that I think that event is at all likely under current management at DC.

- *So the first nun orders a screwdriver, see, and the second one orders a bloody mary, and the bartender turns to the armadillo and says, uh. . .*

Um.

I guess this must be one o' them thar repressed memories. —KT

JAMES PUGH
5422 D. Gilkey Road
Fort Knox, KY 40121

In Search of Fan Artists

I have read only two issues of *Amazing Heroes*, but I am much impressed with the quality of your magazine. I particulary liked the feature about *Jonny Quest*.

However, my main motivation for writing is to inquire about the art that appeared throughout the "Amazing Readers" section of issue #118. Am I correct in assuming that this is all the work of amateur fan artists? I am currently working on an amateur fanzine and am seeking fan artists and writers to contribute. I would like very much to contact all the individuals whose work appeared in the aforementioned section, to see if they would be interested in contributing to an amateur 'zine as mine. While I realize that you may not be able to release their addresses to me, perhaps you could furnish my name and address to them?

For your information, I hope to have my first issue ready for distribution by late November. I welcome contributions, art and writing, from any fans interested in gaining experience.

The individuals whose art appeared in #118 are: M.P. Mann, Greg Wilcox, Brian York, Scott Caywood, Richard Dannys, and Janet Hetherington. If there is any way at all for you to help me contact these people, it will be greatly appreciated.

- *This always made me wonder: if you went to the tougher of the schools in Fort Knox, the one on the bad side of the tracks, could you then later say you graduated from the school of hard Knox? Anyway, good luck with your 'zine. —KT*

LAWRENCE LANEY LOFTIN
Monroe, LA

Subscription Woes

I read with some amusement Steven Robinson's letter in *Amazing Heroes* #122 concerning subscription services. But what I really found amusing was your reply asking if one company ships better than another. Let me tell you why I found that so amusing. On April 27th of this year, I sent off a subscription to both *Amazing Heroes* and to *The Comics Journal*. Seventeen weeks and two days later I received a copy of *Amazing Heroes* #123. Seventeen weeks and three days later I received a copy of *Amazing Heroes* #122. Eighteen weeks later I received a copy of *The Comics Journal*. When I ordered both subscriptions I read the part to please allow six to eight weeks for the arrival of the first issue. But I didn't think by ordering a subscription to both publications that the time would be doubled. Anyway, I guess what I found amusing was that of all the publications to write to about problems with subscriptions, Steven Robinson wrote to you.

- *Maybe, but we printed this letter, didn't we? I know our subscription service is dreadful beyond belief, that we have repeatedly promised to fix it, and that, if anything, it's gotten worse. Let me just say there are certain levels of human incompetence that are almost impossible to surmount, and this has been one of them. Until then, you'd better buy our books at the store—seriously. We're working on getting rid of the culprits, but they're like leeches and it's extraordinarily difficult to go from one subscription "service" to another in the best of times. Which this isn't. —KT*

Don Rosa's INFORMATION CENTER

Questions or corrections to: Don Rosa, 10504-B Easum Rd., Louisville, KY 40299

JOEL B. CABALLES

How about a list of the DC funny animal features???

In a mere 10 words you've posed a *doozy* of a question!

I was familiar with the DC funny animal titles. Even though I don't collect them as does by buddy *Mike Tiefenbacher.* What I did *not* realize is how *many* funny critters DC had in those titles and how they switched from title to title! Mike has been indexing all these DCs as an ongoing project, but still needs around 150 issues of the 550 + funny animal comics that DC published. He sent me his current list of DC critters with an appearance and artist index. To *simplify* the lists, instead of listing *all* the individual issues that Mike is *certain* a particular puppy appeared in, I'll expand it to cover the in-between issues. In other words, even though I'll list issues #1-80 for the appearances of a feature in some title, I'm *not* implying that the feature was in *all* of the issues in that spread (though it *may* have been) but that we know the feature was carried in *most* issues in that range. . .okay? Also, we should thank the poor typists who are going to be re-copying this morass of numbers and abbreviations, and I think I'll understand if a typo or two slips in! *[Thank you, Arlene.—KD]* Speaking of abbreviations, here's the key:

TITLES:
AA—Animal Antics
CC—Comic Cavalcade
DF—DoDo & The Frog
FAF—Flippity and Flop
FC—Fox and the Crow
FF—Funny Folks/Hollywood Funny Folks
FS—Funny Stuff
LC—Leading Comics/Leading Screen Comics
NS—Nutsy Squirrel
PP—Peter Porkchops
PPA—Peter Panda
RK—Racoon Kids
RS—Real Screen Funnies/Comics
SM—Stanley & His Monster
TM—Three Mousketeers
TV—TV Screen Cartoons

ARTISTS:
AH—Allen Hubbard; BH—Bill Hudson; BO—Bob Oksner; BW—Bob Wickersham; DC—Don Christensen; ED—Ed Dunn; HP—Howie Post; HS—Harris Steinbrook or Henry Scarpelli; JB—Jack Bradbury; JD—Jim Davis; MN—Martin Naydel; MS—Mike Sekowski; OF—Otto Fever; OW—Owen Fitzgerald; PL—Pail Lankin; RG-Rube Grossman; RS-Ron Santi; SG—S.G.?; SK-Saul Kessler; SM-Sheldon Mayer; WM-Winslow Mortimer.

There may be a few features on this list which were funny people instead of animals. So sue me.

(HP) Ali Gator: *LC* #42.

(OW) Barney Beagle & Buster: *PP* #53-56; *TM* #15.

(HS?) Benny Bear: *AA* #10; *LC* #25.

(OF) Bernard the Brave: *FF* #20-60; *AA* #21-45; *LC* #38, 58; *FS* #48-70; *DF* #89; *PP* #29-62; *CC* #41-61.

(RG) Biggety Bear: *FF* #36-53; *AA* #27-41; *RK* #63; *LC* #60; *FS* #57-75; *DF* #85, 89; *PP* #6-60; *CC* #41-61.

(RG) Blabber Mouse: *FF* #18, 37, 53; *LC* #72; *FS* #42-72; *DF* #80; *PP* #4, *CC* #32-58.

(RG/SK/SM) Blackie Bear: *FF* #40-63; *AA* #45, 52; *LC* #63-76; *FS* #1-79; *DF* #80; *CC* #50,57; *FS Wheaties* #1.

(SM) Bo Bunny: *FF* #28-49; *NS* #69,72; *AA* #28-51; *RK* #53-61; *LC* #55-76; *FS* #70-77; *DF* #86-90; *PP* #35-61; *CC* #41-61.

(PL/BO/WM) Brat Finks: *FC* #94-98

(OF) Brownie: *LC* #32

(OF) Buff & Bobo: *LC* #44, 45; *FS* #57; *CC* #49.

(RS/SM) Bulldog Drumhead: *FS* #1-14.

(JD) Bush Country Buddies: *RS* #23.

(RG) Buster Bronco: *AA* #13.

(OF) Cagy Clem: *AA* #13.

(OF) Cheepy: *FF* #2-22.

(HP) Chick 'n' Gumbo: *FF* #16-20.

(OF) Crazy Like A Fox: *AA* #10-17.

(RG) Custer the Cat & Cheesy the Mouse: *FF* #41; *AA* #10-47; *NS* #64; *LC* #65; *FS* #74-77; *DF* #90, 91; *PP* #3, 57; *CC* #42-61.

(SM) Dizzy Dog: *FF* #30-38; *NS* #70; *AA* #37-51; *RK* #52-61; *LC* #45-75; *FS* #55-61; *DF* #80-88; *PP* #32-52; *TM* #6, 25; *CC* #41-61; *FC* #91.

(OF) Dodo & The Frog: *FF* #25; *AA* #26, 53; *LC* #41-46; *FS* #20-79; *DF* #80-92; *CC* #32-61; *FC* #88; *FS Wheaties* #1.

(HP/SM) Doodles Duck: *FF* #19-60; *LC* #25-76; *NS* #67, 70; *CC* #34-61; *AA* #32-60; *RK* #62; *FS* #58-79; *DF* #81-92; *PP* #30-48.

(RG) Dusty & Rusty: *AA* #11; *LC* #28, 29; *FS* #13; *FC* #89.

(OF) Eager Beaver: *AA* #1-16.

(SK) Ferdinand Fox: *FF* #7.

(BW/JB/JD/OW) Flippity & Flop: *FAF* #1-47; *RS* #3-128; *TV* #129-138; *FC* #33-61.

(BW/DC/JB/JD/CW/PL) Fox and Crow: *FC* #1-108; *RS* #1-128; *TV* #129-138; *CC* #33-61.

(OF) Fraidy Cat: *FF* #28-50; *AA* #34-46; *NS* #61, 62; *LC* #58-61; *FS* #56, 71; *DF* #92; *CC* #49, 53.

(RG) Frankie & Fannie Flipper: *LC* #15.

(BH) Funny Fez: *LC* #2, 7; *CC* #33.

(HP) Giggle-Toons: *FS* #39, 42; *CC* #35.

(RG) Goofy Goose: *AA* #1-44; *LC* #75; *FS* #73-78; *DF* #88-91; *PP* #1-26; *CC* #32-46.

(RW/DC) Ham Hocks: *FF* #26; *AA* #25, 26.

(RS) Harry the Horse: *FS* #8.

(RG) Helicopter Hal: *LC* #25.

(HS) Henry Hyena: *FS* #17-35; *FS Wheaties* #1.

(RG) Hop, Skip & Jump: *PPA* #5-16.

(SK) Horace Hippo: *FS* #20.

(OF) Hotfoot Pete: *AA* #12.

(JD/OW) Hounds & The Hare: *FC* #1-103; *FAF* #4.

(RS) Hugo Hornspred: *LC* #15-21.

(?) Itty Buddy: *AA* #1.

(OF) J. Fenimore Frog: *FS* #55.
(OF) Joe Kangaroo: *FF* #2-7; *LC* #42; *CC* #32.
(RS/SM/HP) J. Rufus Lion: *FS* #1-61; *CC* #33-34, 46, 58; *PP* #3; *FS Wheaties* #1.
(ED) Jumpin' Juniper: *LC* #15-21.
(HP) Jungle Jingles: *LC* #34.
(RS ?) Kanga Rudy: *AA* #15; *LC* #28.
(RG) King Oscar's Court: *LC* #15-21.
(SM) Li'l Chic-A-Dee: *AA* #32; *CC* #42.
(RG) Lippy Leprechaun: *LC* #15-21.
(OF) Little Leo: *LC* #25.
(RG) Little Ozzie: *AA* #16; *LC* #40.
(SM) McSnurtle the Turtle: *FS* #1-17.
(?) Mike Mole: *CC* #57.
(RS?) Nero Fox: *LC* #15-21.
(OF) Nip & Chip: *FF* #18-56; *NS* #66; *AA* #18-51; *RK* #62-64; *LC* #57-67; *FS* #48-77; *DF* #90; *PP* #45; *TM* #11; *CC* #32-61.
(RG) Nutsy Squirrel: *FF* #1-60; *NS* #61-72; *AA* #23, 25; *FS* #88; *PP* #4; *CC* #32-61.
(OF) Officer Gumshow: *AA* #17.
(PL) Once Upon A Time: *FC* #90, 91.
(SK) O'Pork Family: *FS* #10.
(RG) Ozzie Owl: *FF* #20-37; *AA* #21-44; *LC* #38,62; *FS* #44; *CC* #34,35.
(?) Papa Knows Best: *LC* #30.
(RS?) Patchy: *LC* #15-18.
(OF) Pelican Pete: *LC* #15-29.
(SK/RG) Peter Panda: *FS* #21; *PPA* #1-31.
(OF) Peter Porkchops: *LC* #25-76; *PP* #1-62.
(RG) Pinky & Winky: *FF* #30, 47; *AA* #27-56; *LC* #49-67, 72; *FS* #69; *PP* #20, 29, 34; *CC* #50-53.
(HP) Plato Platypus: *FF* #21-23; *AA* #23; *LC* #39.
(JD?) Polar Playmates: *RS* #3-16.
(ED?) Presto Pete: *AA* #1-19.
(?) Puss & Pooch: *LC* #25-63.
(OF) Raccoon Kids: *AA* #1-51; *RK* #52-64; *CC* #32-50.
(?) Richut: *CC* #32.
(RG) Robin Crusoe: *FF* #11-19.
(RG) Roly & Poly: *FF* #21, 26; *LC* #25-67; *CC* #34-57.
(RG) Rube the Rodent: *FS* #20.
(RG) Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer: *Annuals* 1950-'62.
(BW/DC) Ruff & Reddy: *FF* #22, 28; *PP* #1-4.
(OF) Rusty Rhino: *LC* #35.
(RG?) Salty the Sailor: *LC* #18-21.
(RG) Sheriff Corky: *AA* #1-19.
(OF) Skooky/Pete the Pup: *AA* #1-25.
(OF) Slopsie: *AA* #16.
(?) Snorky: *RS* #10
(OF) Spylot Bones: *LC* #15-21.
(RS) Squeal Porkchops: *FS* #8.
(BO/WM/MS/HS) Stanley & His Monster: *FC* #95-108; *SM* #109-112.
(RG) Stanley the Timid Scarecrow: *PPA* #1-31
(RS) Sweeney & Willie: *FF* #2-16; *CC* #35.
(SM/RG/HS) Three Mouseketeers: *FS* #1-28; *TM* #1-26.
(JD/AH) Tito & Hees Burrito: *RS* #1-128; *TV* #129-138.
(JD) Tito & Rosita: *FS* #13, 15, 28.
(RG) Tortoise & Hare: *AA* #1-58; *LC* #25-65; *PP* #27; *CC* #46-50.
(RG) Treetop Flats: *FF* #2-7.
(JD/OW) Twiddle & Twaddle: *FAF* #1-46; *FC* #4, 64-78.
(SG) Walrus & The Rooster: *FS* #11-17.
(RS?) Walrus Whopper: *AA* #1-5; *LC* #30.
(RS) Who's Who in Zooville: *FS* #1-14; *FF* #2, 7.
(RG/HS) Wilbur: *AA* #2; *PP* #3.
(ED) Willy Wolf: *FF* #4-19; *AA* #22; *LC* #32; *FS* #33; *CC* #32, 33.
(SK) Willy Worm: *FS* #17.
(?) Wobbly Creek: *FF* #1-4.
(OF) Zeke: *LC* #29. ●

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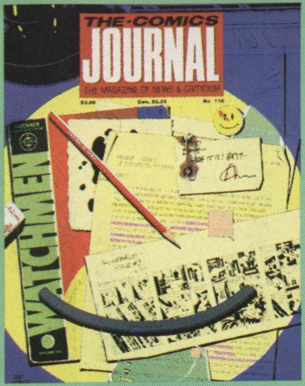
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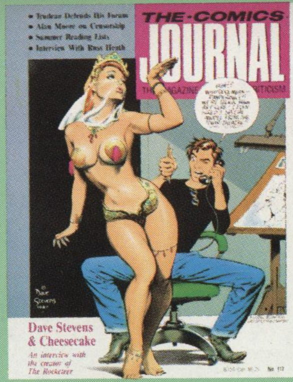
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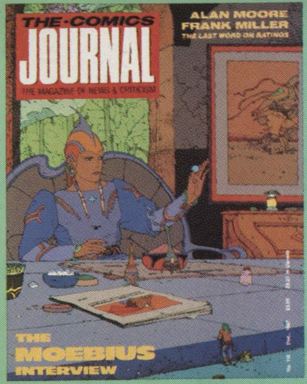
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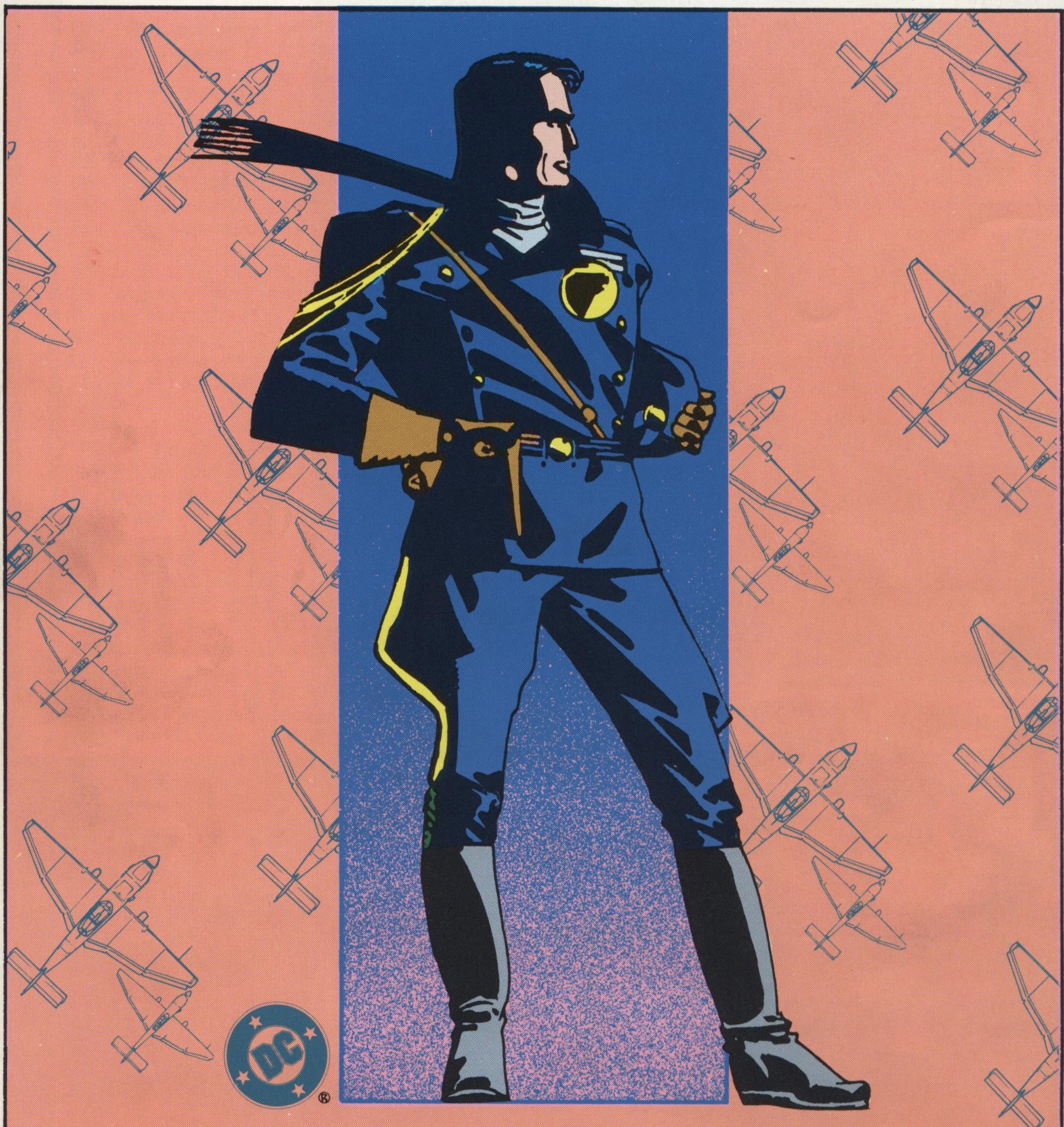

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